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THOUGHTS
ON THE
NAVAL STRENGTH
OF THE
BRITISH EMPIRE.

[Price Two Shillings.]

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ON THE
NAVAL STRENGTH
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BRITISH EMPIRE.
IN TWO PARTS,

By Sir JOHN SINCLAIR, Bart.

THE SECOND EDITION:

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

The CORRESPONDENCE between the late Lord MULGRAVE
and the AUTHOR, on the Subject of the BRITISH NAVY.

But on the Sea be terrible, untam'd,
Unconquerable. ———

THOMSON'S Britannia.

L O N D O N :

Printed for T. CADELL Jun. and W. DAVIES, (Successors to
Mr. CADELL,) in the Strand; J. DEBRETT, Piccadilly;
J. SEWELL, Cornhill; and J. STOCKDALE, Piccadilly.

1795.

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T H O U G H T S
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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IT can hardly be questioned, but that every nerve must now be strained, to render the navy of this country, infinitely superior to what it ever has been, in any former period of our history. We have now an enemy to contend with, that does not stand upon trifles in order to obtain its purposes ; on the contrary, indeed, who carries on its operations, both by sea and land, with a degree of energy and effect, almost unparalleled in history. To fight such a foe, with any chance of victory, can never be looked for, without an exertion on our part, at least equal, if not superior. The means of success, in so far as regards the Naval Department, it is sufficiently demonstrated in the following sheets, are in our power ; and if we do not make a proper

use of them, we have ourselves only to blame. It may be proper, also, to add, that much information has, at various times, been collected by the Author, in regard to the building of ships, and procuring of seamen, in addition to the hints given in the second part of this work, furnishing additional proof of our naval resources; but which, it was judged impolitic to publish, being of a nature of which the enemy might also avail themselves.

The re-printing of these observations, is not intended for the purpose of supporting the views of any particular party. In the situation in which the Author happens to be placed, as President of the Board of Agriculture, it is his wish to avoid engaging in political controversies, and to unite, if possible, all parties, in the great object of carrying on the improvement of the country. That circumstance prevents his publishing what he once intended, his thoughts on the public measures that ought now to be pursued. At the same time, he would have thought it unpardonable, had he neglected directing the attention of the public to our naval resources, at a period when they require so much to be called forth.

CORRESPONDENCE

WITH

The late Lord *MULGRAVE*.

ON the publication of the First Part of the Thoughts on the Naval Strength of the British Empire, in May 1782, the Author thought it right to take an early opportunity of transmitting a copy of it to Lord Mulgrave, in consequence of which, he was some time afterwards favoured with the following letter from his Lordship. As the paper originated, in consequence of some expressions which that gallant and respectable officer made use of in parliament, respecting the fleets of France and England, and as the noble Lord has fully explained his sentiments upon that subject, in a letter which does not seem to have been hastily or unguardedly written, to prevent any possibility of misconstruction, it was thought

necessary to print it, when the following Thoughts were re-published ; and the answer to that letter, which closed the correspondence, it was also judged proper should accompany the same publication.

“ SIR,

*Courageux, Spithead,
June 22d, 1782.*

“ A severe illness, which obliged me to go to Bath, has prevented me from acknowledging sooner the receipt of your note addressed to me at this place, accompanying your very ingenious pamphlet, and from returning my thanks to you, for your polite attention, in communicating to me your observations on opinions supposed to have been delivered by me in the house of commons.

“ It is not at all surprizing if my expressions are sometimes inaccurate, as I never speak with any other preparation than that of the best information on the subject which my industry can procure, always making use of the expressions which suggest themselves at the moment to convey my thoughts, without any premeditated arrangement of words. It is also impossible for any person, particularly one in office who speaks frequently

quently in parliament, so to guard and qualify every argument he uses, that it may not be construed to mean something widely different from what the speaker intended, and to relate to subjects which he had not at the time in his consideration, by taking it independent of what it is connected with in the speech, and without its immediate relation to the subject in debate. I say this from my own experience, as I have sometimes found that I have been mistaken by persons of the fairest intentions. But it has also frequently happened to me, that my opponents have taken a more convenient than candid way of answering me, by first misrepresenting what I had said, and then answering their own misrepresentation. This has happened to me more than once with respect to the expression you allude to. But as I am sensible that when I speak in parliament, I am much more indebted to the indulgence, than entitled to the attention of the house, I never troubled them with explanations, except in points of fact, which related strictly to the business before the house, and the department to which I belonged. I must add, that I have seldom found Almon's Publication of Debates, which you
quote,

quote, accurate as to what I said ; I mention all this to shew, that I see many probable causes of mistake, and I have no doubt you really did conceive you were answering arguments and correcting errors of mine, when you, with the most laudable intentions, so happily displayed, in your Thoughts on the Naval Strength of the British Empire, the great variety of information on many branches of that extensive subject, which you have collected with so much industry, digested with so much precision, and communicated with so much elegance.

“ It has however happened to me, from I know not which of the above-mentioned causes, to have been totally mistaken by you.

“ In the first place, the expressions imputed to me were not mine, and in the second place, the drift of my argument is totally mistaken ; my expression, as nearly as I can recollect, in words, and I am sure precisely in substance, was, “ *That the navy of the House of Bourbon, must be superior to that of this country, whenever the French* “ were

"were free from a continental war, and
 "should employ their resources and attention
 "to that particular department." You must
 remember that it was a frequent topic of
 the invective of the late opposition to the
 King's government, that the admiralty had
 not a superiority in number of ships over
 the House of Bourbon; any inferiority of
 a fleet, an equality, or even a small superi-
 ority, were mentioned as instances of cri-
 minal neglect. It was in answer to one of
 these assertions that my expressions, which
 have been so much mistaken, and so fre-
 quently misrepresented, were used. It was,
 I conceived, unnecessary to declare, that I
 was not giving a dissertation upon all the
 various branches which constitute naval
 strength, when the argument led me only
 to speak of the *number of ships*, and to con-
 tend that it was by comparing the efforts of
 this country at this period with former
 ones, and not with those of the enemy,
 that the conduct of the admiralty was to
 be judged of. The drift of my argument
 was therefore much mistaken, by applying
 that to every branch of naval strength,
 which related only to *ship building*. The
 opinion

opinion thus limited, I doubt whether you differ from. You certainly have not refuted. The idea, that the navy of the House of Bourbon must be superior to that of this country, expressed in the most unqualified terms, had I maintained it, would not have been a new one, since the conduct of our ablest statesmen, from the time of the first partition treaty, to the advice of Lord Chatham to declare war with Spain, on the family compact being formed, appears to have been influenced by that opinion. To have shewn that any assertions really coming from me were "perfectly ill-founded," it would have been necessary for you to prove, that this country alone, can furnish a larger number of ships of the line, than the House of Bourbon, when France and Spain apply all their resources to that object, which I think you have not attempted to do. The assertion, that the times of King William and Queen Anne furnished instances of the navy of France alone having been superior to that of England, when they directed their whole attention to that object, you are so far from having refuted, that you have proved it.

" A specu-

“ A speculative opinion, however ingenious, is no contradiction of an historical fact, stating what was really the case.— When you tell us that the allies *might* have been superior to the French, instead of denying the inferiority of one, you admit that of both the allies. In your note, page 38, you say the French fleet off Beachy-head amounted to 78 men of war, the English had 34 in the engagement, and 18 more blocked up, or not ready as was expected.

“ In your note, page 46, you state the French fleet at the battle of Malaga, to have been 69 sail; the English 45. Here then, Sir, has your accurate industry, furnishes me with examples of an inferiority of 26 sail in King William's reign, and of 24 in Queen Anne's. You tell us indeed, in page 43 and 44, that the assistance of the Dutch was of no service to us; as this is an opinion, not a fact, I shall not meddle with it further than to observe, that the able ministers of those times, held a different one, when they sought that assistance.

“ The periods you so properly mark of the decline of the French navy in those reigns, are the strongest proofs of the justice of my observation,

observation, as to the effect of a continental war on the marine of France. The battle of the Boyne, which, by deciding the fate of Ireland, enabled King William to draw the attention of France to the Continent, was fought within a day of that off Beachy-head; and in Queen Anne's reign, the battle of Malaga was fought in the year in which the victory of Blenheim was gained. Lord Chatham expressed his opinion of the policy of a continental war, by one of those bold figures which characterized his eloquence, when he said, that America was conquered in Germany. If I had had the good fortune to have attracted your attention on other occasions, both in the last and present parliament, I think you would have found that you and I did not differ much on the other points; I have frequently stated (when the mode of manning the fleet was objected to, and that of France preferred to it by the opponents of government), that from the different policy of the two countries, and many other circumstances which I shall not now enter into, the greatest exertions of France in that point were always at the beginning of a war; but that the number of seamen in the English navy encreased in the

course of the war: last year I believe the encrease was twelve thousand. Nor have I been less solicitous to assert, what you are so very properly anxious to vindicate, the claim of our officers and seamen, to the character of superior professional skill and experience.

“ I particularly stated in a debate, not in a full house, and when you probably were not present, upon my former expressions being represented as an unqualified declaration of inferiority, that I had always understood that the naval superiority constantly attributed to this country, was not that of numbers of ships of war, but a superiority of spirit and skill in our officers and seamen. I added, fortunately, that superiority had never been more conspicuous than in some actions this war, which equalled any thing history could produce: my assertion was contradicted, but not refuted, by the present First Lord of the Admiralty *, who contented himself with saying, he should not enter into the argument, but that he was of a different opinion.

“ Upon another occasion, when the word disgraceful was applied to the war, I con-

* The late Lord Keppell.

tended,

tended, that a war in which several officers had so eminently distinguished themselves, should rather be called calamitous than disgraceful.

"I hope I have now convinced you, that both my expressions and meaning have been mistaken; I know not whether I am to say unfortunately, since the mistake has produced so handsome an eulogium on the naval service of this country, and so comfortable a prospect of its strength and resources, from so able a hand; and has at the same time shewn to the public, that a member of the British parliament, not connected by profession or office with the navy, has made it so much his study. It is of little consequence, whether any opinions of mine are mistaken or misrepresented; but if the opinions which you combat have been generally entertained, and would be supposed to derive any degree of weight from being imputed to me, it was essential that they should be refuted with the degree of force and authority, which your abilities and name must give to the refutation. It will, I hope, be a sufficient apology for my troubling you with a long letter, that I was
anxious

anxious not to suffer in your opinion so much as I must do, whilst you can suppose that under the circumstances of being “ a
 “ sea officer, and a member of parliament,
 “ and having sat at the board of admiralty,
 “ I should have been totally ignorant of the
 “ natural advantages Great Britain is possessed
 “ of for the acquisition of maritime power,
 “ and totally inattentive to the almost uni-
 “ form train of success, which has attended
 “ the naval exertions of this country.”

“ I cannot take leave of your pamphlet without expressing my hopes, that the present officers will stand well enough in your opinion, not to make it necessary to revert to the dead, for humbling the pride of the House of Bourbon. That you will think Sir George Rodney's correspondence as good “ a pattern for modern seamen ” as Sir George Walton's; that his late glorious victory has furnished one of the most brilliant instances of the superiority of the English navy; and that he has shewn in his own person, on several occasions, one of the brightest examples of the pre-eminent excellence of the English officers. You will, I hope, also agree with me in thinking Sir Samuel

Hood's conduct at St. Christopher's, was not inferior to Sir John Harman's, which you mention with so much praise. Allow me to express my doubts of the advantages you think might be obtained, by the institution of a naval order. I fear, in this country, such a distinction would be as frequently granted, to the importunity of interest, as to the claims of merit; those who aspire to emulate the great characters that adorn our history, must have their ambition directed to nobler objects than the gifts of favour or the trappings of vanity. Believe me, Sir, the officers of the navy find sufficient incentives to distinguish themselves in the consciousness of their duty, the approbation of their profession, and the applause of their country.

I have the honour to be,

&c. &c. &c. &c.

(Signed) MULGRAVE."

However flattering the above letter might be, from the encomiums bestowed upon the performance in question, yet, as the author could not agree with the noble Lord, in regard to some of the positions contained
in

in it, he was thence induced to return an answer, of which a copy is subjoined.

“ MY LORD,

“ I thought it unnecessary to trouble your Lordship with any remarks on the letter I had the honour of receiving from you, until the Channel fleet, the *Courageux*, and its gallant commander, had returned into port. I now sit down once more to acknowledge the receipt of that able performance*, and, however unequal to the task, must beg leave to controvert some of the principles and positions which it contains.

“ The tract transmitted to your Lordship was intended as an answer to certain opinions, which I apprehended were stated by Lord Mulgrave in his place in parliament. And indeed I find it was only in this respect that I misunderstood your Lordship, namely, not conceiving it to be your opinion, that when France was involved in a landed continental war, that you thought the fleet of England in that case might be superior. Whereas the idea which any investigation of the subject has led me to en-

* The receipt of the letter had been previously acknowledged.

tertain, is this, that the navy of England must always be superior to that of France, when it is properly conducted, (whether that country is engaged or not in a continental war,) in consequence of our being clearly possessed of the greatest natural and political advantages for the acquisition of naval power. I must observe at the same time, that the question in my apprehension was confined, to the respective pretensions of France and of Great Britain, and did not extend to the claims of any other of the branches of the House of Bourbon.

“ There are but three particulars in which France can claim a superiority over England—population—revenue—and extent of European territory.

“ In the tract transmitted to your Lordship, the question of population was considered, and an opinion was given, which I still consider to be well-founded, that population is of little consequence for the acquisition of naval power, unless that population is upon the coast.—For instance, the maritime strength of England, at least with respect to an increase of sailors, is very little

benefited by the inland counties of Worcestershire, Nottinghamshire, and the like; and on the same principles, the inland provinces of France, which compose by far the greatest proportion of that monarchy, however populous they may be, are of little naval utility.

“The revenue of France is surely superior to that of England, in point of amount. But at the same time, when the enormous armies which France must keep up in consequence of its being situated on a continent, and the great expence of a luxurious and despotic court, are considered, it may be safely affirmed, that the revenue of England either is, or ought to be, superior for efficient naval purposes. Hence Du Tot is of opinion, that ten millions of livres, about 500,000*l.* per annum, is all that France can afford to lay out upon that department. Whereas 1,500,000*l.* per annum (at least since the year 1764) has been our peace establishment for the navy.

“The only remaining circumstance in which we are inferior, is extent of territory; for France contains 138,837, and Great Britain and Ireland only 105,000
a 3
square

square miles. The possession of greater extent of territory, however, is evidently of little consequence as to the present question, unless it can be made use of to increase the maritime strength of a state. Germany contains 181,631 square miles, but no one from thence can assert, that it ought to have a better or more numerous fleet than France. In point of extent of coast, and still more in respect of number of harbours, France must yield the palm to Great Britain; and in many other particulars, such as materials, provisions, commerce, naval skill, government, national character, &c. it can stand no competition.

“ So far with respect to theory. But your Lordships seems to be of opinion that the fact is rather against the pretensions of England, at least with regard to the number of ships of war. I must take the liberty however, as to this particular, of differing with Lord Mulgrave. From the states given at nearly the same period of time by Monsieur Du Tot and Mr. Pepys (see Naval Thoughts, page 32 and 33.) of the respective fleets of France and England, no such

7 inferiority

inferiority in point of number can be traced; and if the records of both admiralties were to be searched, from any printed information I have been able to collect, it would fully appear, that in the ports of England there always were as many ships, if not more, than in those of France, whenever hostilities actually took place between the two nations, or even when a war was apprehended.

“ But the accidental superiority at Beachy-head, merely owing to the confusion of a new and unsettled government, seems greatly to weigh with your Lordship. I am not ashamed of confessing, that it has no weight with me. A single circumstance, or a single engagement, cannot be brought as a sufficient proof of the soundness of so important a system. If it were, your Lordship might prove that the fleet of England must always be superior to the united navies of France and Spain; because in the course of this war, Lord Rodney, with twenty-one ships of the line, encountered Langara, with only fourteen sail belonging to the enemy. Besides, no fact in history can be better

ascertained than this, that Lord Torrington must have been superior in number to the French at Beachy-head, had they been a little less active, and had we been a little more so. Nay, there is great reason to believe, and I find it the uniform tradition here, (for I am writing within sight of the spot where the battle was fought,) that the victory would have inclined to us had the Dutch been properly supported.

“In regard to continental wars, on which your Lordship seems to lay so much stress, I must beg leave to remark, that it is questionable how far they have operated on any occasion, even to the naval advantage of this country? If they prevented the French from attending to their navy, they have also uniformly proved a gulph which absorbed the strength and resources of Great Britain; and, one thing, I believe, is certain, that when the French and English were both engaged as principals, in a continental war, that the expence of the latter, in carrying it on, always has been, and always must be, greater than the expence of the former, (in consequence of its insular situation,)

situation,) and therefore it must proportionably be more disabled than France from having, at the same time, a continental war, and a powerful marine. It is almost unnecessary to remark, that France can hardly be engaged in such a war, without Great Britain being the principal, or leading power in the scale against her.

“ I cannot conclude this part of the subject, without remarking, that there seems to have been too much reason for those loud complaints against our naval rulers, in the reigns of King William and Queen Anne, which, in those days, were so much the subjects of public discussion; and without hazarding an opinion, that the events to which your Lordship alludes, were more owing to the mismanagement of those who were at the helm, than to any real naval inability in the state.—Parliament always did its part, by furnishing very ample and liberal supplies. In the year 1704, in particular, I see by the Journals of the House, no less a number than 40,000 seamen voted, and 5,000 soldiers for the sea-service. Thirty thousand sailors and soldiers, on the authority

rity of Du Tot, was the greatest number
 that ever France had before the year 1730 ;
 and since, it is well known, that English
 ships were always manned by fewer sailors
 than the French. This appears to be a de-
 cislve proof, that in the reign of Queen
 Anne, we must have had more ships than
 they had, even without the assistance of
 the Dutch ; and yet, from the inattention,
 the negligence, or the want of informa-
 tion of the Board of Admiralty, or of the
 Cabinet, at the time, we were occasionally
 inferior. I cannot pass over this example
 in the reign of Queen Anne, of so large a
 body of our land forces being destined for
 naval purposes, without requesting your
 Lordship seriously to consider how far we
 ought to imitate that example at this time.
 Suppose, for instance, that 5 or 10,000 sol-
 diers were sent to Portsmouth, to Plymouth,
 and to Chatham, were to be dressed in
 round hats, trowsers, and blue jackets, and
 were to be daily trained for the space of six
 months in naval manœuvres, is it not pro-
 bable that the whole, or at least the greatest
 part of them, might be qualified against
 that time to act as ordinary seamen ?

“ I am

“I am sorry to find that your Lordship is of opinion, that a naval order would not be attended with any advantage to the service. I am one of those who think, that the brave tars of England, cannot have too many incitements to behave well, and whenever they act with peculiar courage and good conduct, that they ought to be conspicuously rewarded. A naval order seems almost to be essential to a maritime state, at least it is an institution from whence no harm could possibly arise, and from which, by judicious management, much good might be expected.

“You very justly observe, that in the Naval Thoughts, no attention has been paid to the gallant actions which have been performed this war; they did not come within the compass of the author’s intention, nor did the accounts of Lord Rodney’s victory reach England until after the pamphlet was published. It was indeed a very hasty performance, composed during the Easter recess, and printed rather with a view of gratifying the author’s feelings at the moment, than from any hopes of credit or of praise. I propose, however, should I live to see this war brought

brought to a conclusion, to extend the tract to a small volume, containing a fuller state of the natural and political advantages of this country for the acquisition of naval power, and a short detail of the recent as well as ancient prowess of our gallant seamen: A work on the subject of the navy of England in general, without any allusion to the opinions which your Lordship either did, or was supposed to entertain.

“ It now only remains that I should acknowledge the unmerited encomiums bestowed by your Lordship upon the tract in question, and to express the regret with which I heard, that from the state of your health, the public had run the risk of losing the services of so able and so gallant an officer; for whom no one can entertain a higher degree of respect, than he who has the honour to subscribe himself,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

And very humble Servant,

(Signed) JOHN SINCLAIR.”

Eastbourne, Sussex, 15 August 1782.

The

The above letter ended the correspondence, and it is not improbable that the controversy closed, as is usual on such occasions, both parties retaining the opinion they had originally formed, at least without any material variation. It is fortunate however, when such differences terminate, as was the case in this instance, with perfect good humour on both sides, and without leaving the smallest tincture of personal animosity or dislike.

It is impossible, however, for the Author to conclude, without expressing his regret, that his country, since the above correspondence closed, should have been deprived of the services of so gallant and skilful an officer, to whom the public might now have looked up, with confidence, for naval assistance, either at sea, or in the cabinet.

The above letter ended the correspondence, and it is not improbable that the controversy about it is still on foot on certain points, retaining the opinion they had originally formed, at least about any material addition. It is fortunate, however, when such differences terminate as was the case in this instance, with perfect good humor on both sides, and without leaving the faintest shadow of personal animosity or dislike.

It is impossible, however, for the author to conclude without expressing his regret that the community, which has shown so much interest in the subject, should have been deprived of the services of so gallant and efficient a leader, to whom the public mind may have looked for the most successful results.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

First Edition of PART I.

Originally printed in 1782.

IT is a circumstance well known to the world in general, that a certain noble Lord, a member of the Lower House, who lately sat at the Board of Admiralty*, asserted in his place in Parliament, that the Navy of France, might always be superior to that of England, when the French bent their whole exertions to that particular department. So dangerous an opinion coming from so respectable a quarter, naturally led the Author to investigate the subject for his own private satisfaction. Though fully convinced, from that inquiry, that the noble Lord's assertion was perfectly ill-grounded; yet, he trusted, that

* The late Lord Mulgrave.

some

some abler hand would have undertaken the task of refuting it. Finding, however, that the Navy of England is at present without any literary champion, he has thrown together his thoughts upon the subject, with a view of contributing his mite, to counteract the dispiriting effects of an idea, which cannot be too speedily and thoroughly exploded.

THOUGHTS
ON THE
NAVAL STRENGTH
OF THE
BRITISH EMPIRE.

PART I.

[Originally printed anno 1782.]

WHEN the affairs of a nation are unsuccessfully conducted, it is natural to view every circumstance in the darkest light.—Its present situation is always painted in the most deplorable colours; its future prospects are considered to be still more gloomy: nay, political sceptics do not hesitate to doubt the existence of its former splendour. In this manner the spirit of the nation is depressed, the vigour of its efforts is relaxed; its enemies exult over it, and it

seems ready to crouch under the fury of their attacks.

It is difficult on any other principle to account for an idea, which has been lately spread abroad, and has found its way into the great council of the nation; the tendency of which is, to depreciate the former strength and character of the British Navy.— In the days of conquest and of triumph, we have always ventured to consider ourselves as the natural sovereigns of the ocean; and even foreigners, however partial they may have been to the maritime honour of their respective countries, have in general acknowledged the justice of our claim to the dominion of the sea *. How much therefore must we feel ourselves humbled, when we are told, in the days of our adversity, by

* “ L’Angleterre a depuis long tems gagné la supériorité sur mer,” says that respectable political author Beau-sobre. *Introduction Générale a L’Etude de la politique*, p. 514. The famous Mr. De Real, in his *Science du Gouvernement*, tom. ii. p. 340, asserts, “ Que les armes navales que, la Grande Bretagne entretient, la rendent supérieure a quelque puissance maritime que ce soit.” The verses of Voltaire on the English nation are well known.

“ Ils sont Rois sur les eaux.

“ Leur flotte impérieuse asservissant Neptune,

“ Des bouts de l’univers appelle la fortune.”

La Henriade, chant. premier.

one

one who, considering his office, his profession and character, ought not to have been misinformed, "that the navy of France
"alone, always was, and always must be
"superior to that of England, when the
"French bend their whole attention to that
"particular department*."

The Author of these sheets, having heard with infinite regret, this ill-grounded and dangerous opinion, and dreading the consequences which at a moment like the present such an assertion may produce, should it remain unrefuted, has ventured to attempt, (with the hopes of calling forth the abilities and exertion of more able and better informed persons,) to state his reasons for refusing his assent to such a proposition.

The assertion of the noble Lord, to which I allude, must have been grounded, either

* Lord Mulgrave's words, as stated in Almon's Debates, (27th November 1781,) are, "That it was an incontrovertible truth, (and the times of King William and Queen Anne introduced examples of the justice of the remark,) that whenever the French directed their whole attention to the improvement and increase of their marine, they rendered it superior to the fleet of Great Britain, and were able to contend with us for the dominion of the ocean." For his Lordship's real sentiments upon the subject, see his Letter to the Author, prefixed to this part, dated 22d June 1782.

upon a misconception of the natural advantages of which Great Britain is possessed, for the acquisition of maritime power, or a fatal inattention, to the almost universal train of success which has attended the naval exertions of this country. — These two points I propose shortly to consider.

Extent of
coast.

1. That nation in the first place is the most likely to be powerful at sea, which has the greatest extent of coast, and consequently, a greater proportion of whose inhabitants, must have a natural predilection for the sea:—In this respect, Great Britain claims a preference over every other state in Europe.—The sea-line of England, Scotland and Ireland, and of the adjacent islands, is calculated by Sir William Petty to extend to 3,800 miles, and is probably more: whereas France, whose coast contains but about 1000 miles of sea-line, is in this important article greatly inferior*.

Number of
harbours.

2. The coast of Great Britain and Ireland is not only more extensive, than that of any other power in Europe, but is also every where intersected by admirable har-

* Petty's Works, p. 259.

bours.

bours*.—Indeed the frequency and violence of the westerly winds which occasion those heaps of sand, by which the Dutch ports are blocked up, are the reasons that so many deep and commodious harbours are found upon the English side of the Channel, and so few upon the French and Dutch; an advantage given us by Nature, which never can be equalled by any art or expence of our neighbours †.—Nay, in respect of extent of coast and number of havens, France is not only inferior to Spain, but can scarcely stand a comparison with Italy itself ‡.

3. It is also a considerable advantage which Great Britain enjoys, that its harbours are all contiguous to each other, and are not divided, like those of France, by the territories of any other Power: this renders it easy for Great Britain to assemble her naval forces upon the shortest notice, and en-

Their contiguity.

* Campbell, in his Political Survey, has given us a very accurate account of the harbours belonging to Great Britain.

† Political Essays, quarto, p. 15 and 16.

‡ Mr. Horseley, in his treatise on maritime affairs, p. 45, &c. proves, that France, instead of being equal to Great Britain, is scarcely on a par with Denmark and Sweden, in respect to natural advantages for the acquisition of maritime power.

ables her to exert her whole maritime force, with united vigour, against any Power with whom she may be at war.—Whereas the distance between the ports of Toulon and Brest, is no inconsiderable addition, to the many other maritime disadvantages to which France is subjected*.

Anchorage in
our bays.

4. But had we fewer harbours, our bays alone would in general answer the purposes of commerce and of war.—Whilst the westerly winds blow, which is generally the case above half the year, our ships may ride at anchor with perfect security, in our roads.—Besides, our anchor-hold is much better than our neighbours can boast of; for our shores generally consist of a stiff clay, chalk, or hard gravel, whilst the French and Dutch have nothing but rocks or loose sand to anchor on†.

Situation.

5. The situation of Great Britain is also extremely favourable to maritime power.—It is an island, not confined as Sicily, to the range of one particular sea, but, unimmured by straits, finds no obstruction in sending

* M. De Real, tom. ii. p. 341.

† Bafton on Trade, p. 25.

forth her fleets to every hemisphere.—It is also fortunately placed in the very centre of Europe, and along its coast above one half of the trade of Europe must pass.—This natural advantage the great De Wit considers to be of the most essential importance*.

6. The great advantage which Nature Fishing. has given us for maritime power, in consequence of the variety of fish with which our seas abound, need not be strongly insisted upon.—It is indeed universally acknowledged that there is no part in the world where such quantities are to be met with at every season of the year, better calculated, either for the purposes of maintaining the inhabitants of the kingdom, or of serving as a lucrative branch of commerce with other powers, or for raising a valuable addition to the number of our seamen†.

* Interest of Holland, part ii. chap. 9. De Real, tom. ii. p. 341.

† It is calculated, that 10,000 people, including apprentices, are employed along the coasts of England in the oyster fishery alone. Vide Representation of the State of the English Oyster Fisheries, p. 6.

Commerce.

7. Foreign commerce is undoubtedly a great source of naval strength, and Great Britain, it is certain, enjoys that advantage to as great, if not a greater extent than any other power in Europe.—But the trade carried on along the coasts of the island, is of a more permanent and lasting nature, neither depending upon the fancy of foreigners, nor standing in any dread of competition.—Such commerce, therefore, must be accounted the only sure and substantial foundation of naval power.—It has been calculated that the coasting trade itself employs 100,000 sailors; but though that account must be exaggerated, without doubt it breeds a greater number of excellent seamen than any other nation in Europe can boast of*.

Materials.

8. It is also a singular advantage enjoyed by Great Britain, that it not only has a demand for shipping, but is also furnished with the principal materials which shipping requires.—I am well aware, that various

* “ On trouve par un calcul modéré plus de cent mille matelots, pour le commerce de L’Angleterre seule, de port à port.”
Remarques sur les Avantages de la France, &c. p. 138.

maritime articles are procured from other countries, which it is supposed impossible for this island itself to furnish; yet this ought rather to be imputed, to the inattention of the natives of the island, or to the little encouragement given by the legislature to such productions, than to any national defect in the soil or climate of the country.— If other materials however must be purchased from abroad, the English oak, must always be considered, for strength and firmness, to be superior to the timber of our neighbours*.

9. It is well known, that the English Building. were the first who brought the building of ships of war to its present state of perfection, and its shipwrights, still retain the high character they formerly acquired for

* It was formerly an express condition in all contracts for building ships for the royal navy, that they should be built of good substantial *English* oak. But owing to the scarcity of timber, this restriction has been no longer insisted upon.— Soon after the Restoration, plans were proposed by the corporation of shipwrights, for the preservation and increase of oak, which, after going through all the forms of office, namely, being referred first to the Attorney-General, and by him to the Navy-Board, was at last suffered to sleep in oblivion.

Letter to the Earl of Marlborough, p. 17 and 18.

skill

skill in their profession.—That advantage, however, pertains no longer in an exclusive manner to this nation. The fatal friendship of that profligate monarch Charles the Second for his ambitious neighbour Lewis, first gave the French an opportunity of acquiring an art, which they have since vainly attempted to turn to the ruin of their instructors*.

Provisions.

10. It is impossible also for any nation to carry on an extensive commerce, or to be a great naval power, unless the soil and climate of the country be well calculated for producing proper sustenance for its mariners whilst at sea.—In this particular, Great Britain and Ireland lay claim to a great superiority over every State in Europe, the soil and climate of the British islands

* Frigates of the present construction, were first built by one Pet.—English shipwrights were supposed to be so peculiarly skilful in their profession, that by their charter, they were prohibited to communicate their art to any foreign Prince or State. The English, says Sir William Temple, keep their neighbours in awe, by the strength of their oak, *the art of their shipwrights*, and the invincible courage of their seamen.—Vide Survey of the Constitutions of the Empire, &c.

To the *form* of their ships, however, the French have been particularly attentive.

being

being much better suited for raising every species of naval provision than either France or Spain; and the superior quality of the food on which they live, must also render our seamen a more hardy and braver race of men than those of our neighbours.

11. The skill and experience of our seamen cannot be equalled.—A very different race of men must be formed along the stormy coasts of this country, from that produced along the pacific shores of the Mediterranean.—Accustomed as our sailors are, to brave the dangers of the sea, those storms which appear tremendous to others, are not considered by them as attended with any risque.—Indeed, if one set of men can be said to enjoy any great superiority over another, it may be safely affirmed, that the British seamen, who are bred along the coasts of these islands, are entitled to that fortunate distinction.

Naval skill.

12. An insular situation, in every point of view, whether for naval strength or otherwise, is to be preferred. The sea is undoubtedly the safest and most natural boundary, of which it is very difficult to get

Insular situation.

get the better, and impossible to remove *.
 " Athens, says Xenophon, rules the sea ;
 " but as the country of Attica is joined to
 " the continent, it is ravaged by enemies,
 " while the Athenians are engaged in dif-
 " ferent expeditions.—Their leaders suffer
 " their lands to be destroyed, and secure
 " their wealth by sending it to some island.
 " The populace, who are not possessed of
 " lands, have no uneasiness. But if the
 " inhabitants inhabited an island, and be-
 " sides this enjoyed the empire of the sea,
 " they would, as long as they were pos-
 " sessed of those advantages, be able to an-
 " noy others, and at the same time be out of
 " all danger of being annoyed." One would
 imagine, says Montesquieu, that Xenophon
 was speaking of England †.

In fact, if we made the most of our in-
 sular situation by confining our whole at-
 tention to maritime affairs, and trusted our
 defence to a militia and to a fleet, it would
 soon appear, that our naval force had
 scarcely arrived to one half of its natural

* Campbell's Polit. Survey, vol. i. c. 3.—Burgh's Polit.
 Disquis. book iii. ch. 3.—Craftsman, No. 340. vol. 10.
 p. 89.

† Spirit of Laws, book xxi. c. 7.

extent.

extent.—Almost our whole revenue, (at least a much greater part of it than can be done by any continental power whatsoever,) might be expended in fitting out our fleets; and when only one object is kept in view, it is surely more likely to be raised to the greatest height of perfection it is capable of, than when the attention is distracted by matters of a different nature *.

13. Farther. It is a great advantage, the possession of which our very enemies acknowledge, that the capital of the kingdom is not situated like that of France, in the heart of the kingdom, but that in London may be seen united all the politeness attending a royal presence, with all the spirit and activity that results from an extended commerce, and from naval power. At Paris, says Deslandes, one sees a voluntary indolence, which concerns itself about nothing that does not contribute either to

Situation of
the capital.

* England, says Boccalini, vol. i. p. 13. is surrounded by the sea, which serves her as a bulwark against the insults of her ambitious enemies, and a frontier which it costs her nothing to maintain. Whereas her neighbours the Dutch are obliged to be at a perpetual and extraordinary charge, to keep out the sea on the one side, and the French on the other.

pleasure

pleasure or amusement; whereas in London, none are so blind as not to see, or so obstinate as not to acknowledge, that upon the prosperity of commerce, and consequently of naval power, depends the happiness of the State.

Character of
the nation.

Lastly, The character of the English nation, steady in its pursuits, and not apt to be discomposed by every trifling obstacle, seems to be peculiarly calculated for the acquisition of maritime power. Naval strength is not the growth of a day, nor is it possible to retain it, when once acquired, without the utmost difficulty, and the most unwearied attention. The English have proved by their conduct, for almost two centuries, the firmness and steadiness of their naval character. Whereas the maritime enthusiasm of the French has only occasionally taken place, and does not seem consistent with the natural bent and genius of the people.—Works that require great application, says Cardinal Richelieu, are little calculated for the humour and disposition of the French nation*.

* Deslandes on Maritime Power, p. 110.

Having

Having thus briefly run over the various advantages to which Britain lays claim for the acquisition of the dominion of the sea, let us next examine, what are the sources of the naval strength of our powerful rivals the French. I shall consider them distinctly as stated by the Count de la Bournovilliers, who is justly considered to be one of the most ingenious, and one of the best informed French authors upon the subject of politics.

1. In the first place, this Author attempts to prove, that the position of France, is sufficiently favourable, for forming a navy, equal to that of the two maritime Powers of England and Holland.

Position of
France.

In examining this subject, the Author, whose only object was to rouse the spirits of his countrymen, depressed by the naval misfortunes of the war preceding the period in which he wrote, (that of 1756,) has prudently omitted, making any comparison, between the extent of coast belonging to the two nations, or the number of harbours they are possessed of; but bewilders the reader, by stating in general

terms, that France possesses more ports than England in the Mediterranean sea, as if that little gulph, was the only, or the principal theatre of commerce and of naval power. Without disputing the truth of that assertion, or that France is nearer to Spain and Portugal, and to the coasts of Barbary, than Britain, it may be sufficient to remark, that naval strength can never depend upon such trivial circumstances.—The Mediterranean is no longer the great emporium of Europe; and the most powerful maritime nation there, may be but little respected in every other hemisphere.

This author, indeed, is so anxious to prove that France ought to be the first maritime power in Europe, that he states those very circumstances as advantages in its favour, which ought to be accounted some of the greatest obstacles that country has to contend with.—The navy of France, he observes, may be divided into two branches, whose interests may be separate, and which may have different objects in view.—This is actually the case: but the consequence of it is, that the squadrons of Toulon and Brest, are more like the fleets of confederates,

ates, than of one powerful state.—Nor is the mild and temperate climate of France (a circumstance he lays much weight upon) at all favourable to the maritime power of that country.—The brave, hardy, and experienced sailor, is not bred by gentle zephyrs, but amidst the storms and tempests of the north: and that man is most likely to be master of himself, amidst the confusion and horrors of a naval fight, who has been most accustomed to the fury of the tempest, and to the dangers of the sea *.

2. The Count de Boulainvilliers in the second place attempts to prove, that the commerce of France is sufficient to furnish the means of disputing the empire of the sea, even with the united strength of England and Holland. Its commerce.

This ingenious author, amuses himself so much, with the naval strength which France *might have*, by increasing its trade in the Mediterranean, and by wise and prudent regulations tending to augment its commerce in grain, that until it is proved that such

* Vide Monson's Naval Tracts, book iii.

circumstances are likely to take place, it will be needless to bestow upon them much consideration. It is sufficient to remark, that foreign or colonial commerce, can never be a permanent basis of naval strength.—That nation is the most likely to continue powerful at sea, which is the best calculated to enjoy great trade, exclusive of connexions with its neighbours; and even a Frenchman will acknowledge, that if the commerce of France was reduced to its coasting trade, it would not be very considerable*.

Commodities.

3. In the third place, we are entertained with some arguments in proof of this assertion; that the commodities of France, require as many ships to transport them, as those of Holland and England united.

* Maffie, in his Historical Account of the Naval Power of France, gives us the following state of the number of French ships and sailors, anno 1744:

		Ships.	Men.
European commerce	—	1000	— 20,000
Fisheries	—	600	— 27,000
Sugar colonies	—	700	— 14,000
		2300	61,000

Little of this naval strength can be considered of so lasting and durable a nature as the coasting trade of England.

If we could imagine with this author, that the one hundred and fifty millions of acres which France contains, were all subjected to the labours of the husbandman, his problem even in that case would be difficult to prove.—He is either ignorant or unwilling to acknowledge, that the commerce of coal alone, (an article of transportation in which France can never rival us) employs more seamen than all the coasting trade of that country; and were it not for the absurd and impolitic duty which is laid upon that necessary of life, it might alone be accounted a sufficient foundation for acquiring the maritime empire. This author indeed, must be not a little at a loss to assign just grounds for the naval pretensions of the French, when he states the predilection for the modes and fashions of that country, as one of the great supports of its marine.—Gewgaws, and little fripperies, will never be able to acquire the dominion of that rough and boisterous element*.

* Sir Thomas Clarges says, "The strength of England consists in its marine, in which, for want of men, France can never equal us; their trade will not breed them. A ship of 50 tons will carry 100,000 l. of their goods. Ours are bulky goods, and require twenty times more."

Grey's Debates, vol. viii. p. 366.

Materials.

4. Under the head of materials, the Count has not favoured us with any important observations: though he claims in this respect an independence on the other powers in Europe, yet that claim is perfectly without foundation.—All the principal materials of the French marine are purchased from foreigners.—Nor is it possible that its concerns should be distinct from those of the other powers in Europe.—Great maritime empires must always interest themselves in the prosperity of those nations with whom they have any commercial intercourse.

Population.

5. Though the population of France is confessedly superior to that of England, yet it is absurd on that account to affirm, that it ought proportionably to have a greater number of seamen.—There might be some justice in this assertion, had France all its inhabitants upon the coast. But as long as the greatest part of the natives of the British isles, and on the whole by far a greater number than France can boast of, must necessarily live in the neighbourhood of the sea, even in the article of population Great Britain may claim the preference.—Sir William Petty calculates, that
every

every part of England, Scotland, and Ireland, is, one with another, but twelve miles from the sea. Whereas France, by the same method of computation, is no less than from sixty-five to seventy: a naval advantage in favour of Great Britain which cannot easily be compensated*.

6. Another advantage which France lays claim to, still remains to be considered, namely, the boasted security of her coasts.—Some descents, as stated by Mr. Deslandes, it is certain have been unsuccessfully attempted.—But this circumstance is not owing to the peculiar strength of the French coasts, but to the unavoidable risque and danger by which such undertakings are attended, and which nothing but such a scheme as an ingenious author of our own country suggests can possibly prevent†.—No friend to humanity however can regret, that nature has thrown some obstacles in the way of so obnoxious a species of warfare, which nothing but necessity can justify.

Strength of
its coasts.

* Polit. Arth. chap. 4.

† Horsley, on Maritime Affairs, p. 38, &c. Some excellent hints are thrown out by this author, on the subject of the navy.

Position of
Brest.

7. There is but one advantage which France is possessed of, which Great Britain has any reason to envy or regret ; namely, the fortunate position of the port of Brest, situated in a peninsula, which stretching far into the ocean, is of great service to expedite the sailing of her fleets. But this advantage, even in the opinion of Frenchmen, is overbalanced, by the great distance of that naval arsenal from the court and the capital. A circumstance which has ever proved a very considerable impediment to the success of her naval operations*.

Such are the natural claims of England, and the absurd pretensions adduced in favour of France, to the dominion of the sea.—It will next be necessary to consider, what were the consequences of the many advantages which the former enjoys for the acquisition of maritime power; and with what justice it may be asserted, that the naval exertions of Great Britain against France, have been almost uniformly successful.

* Brest is 300 miles from Paris ; Portsmouth but 73 from London. Had Brest been only 70 miles from Paris, the late fortunate excursion of Admiral Barrington to the French coast, would not probably have turned out so successful.

It

It is unnecessary to trace the maritime history of England, or of any other power in Europe, to a remoter period than the reign of Queen Elizabeth. For though the commencement of the English navy has been supposed by some to have taken place in the year 1512, when commissioners to manage our naval affairs were first appointed; and though ever since a certain number of strong and great ships of war have been permanently and regularly kept on foot by the crown, yet for many years afterwards, no remarkable exploits at sea seem to have taken place.

Naval transactions during the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

Even in the time of Queen Elizabeth, which has always been considered a maritime reign, the royal navy of England was not remarkable for the number of its ships of war.—Sir Edward Coke thinks it matter of boast that it amounted to thirty-three sail. But however insignificant that number may appear in these times, it was fully a match for the naval armaments of the enemies of England *.

* Black. Com. vol. i. p. 418. Bolingbroke's Works, vol. ii. p. 150. Queen Elizabeth, at her death, left 42 sail, of different sizes.—Monson's Naval Tracts, book i.

The Spanish Armada indeed was a naval meteor, which seemed to portend destruction wherever it bent its force: but the intrinsic strength of this armament was in truth extremely insignificant: for we are informed by a respectable Spanish author*, that the whole fleet, which consisted of 132 sail, had not on board above 8252 seamen.—The want of success therefore in that attempt is not to be wondered at; for the fleet of England, though inferior in respect to the size of its vessels, yet had on board no less a number than 15,785 men well skilled in maritime affairs †.

The naval successes of Queen Elizabeth against the Spaniards, raised the reputation of this island to the highest pitch.—She became the terror of Europe—and it is said, that in the year 1601, the French, whose

* Uztariz on Commerce, vol. i. p. 392.

† The following seems to be an exact state of the strength of the two fleets, as given us by Spanish as well as English writers:

	Ships. Tons. Sailors, Soldiers. Slaves.				
The Spanish Armada	132	59120	8252	21855	2808
The English fleet	197	29744	15785	1875	

Vide Entick's Naval History, p. 261. He states the number of Spanish seamen at 8786; but I rather trust to the authority of Herrera and Uztariz.

pitiful navy did not exceed three ships of war, however trifling that number may appear, were not permitted by that spirited princess to build the smallest addition to it*.

The pacific government of James the First, was not conspicuous for any great maritime efforts: but at the same time we may learn from the writings of a contemporary author, in what estimation our commerce and naval forces were considered. This writer, though a Frenchman and a courtier, fairly confesses, after stating that England might assemble 400 vessels of different sizes, that he could say very little (on n'en peut dire grand chose) of the marine of France †.

Reign of
James the
First.

The reign of James the First however, is distinguished by a circumstance, so humbling to the naval pride of France, that every author who has written upon that subject has not failed to take notice of it.—When the timidity of that monarch, and the bold

* Grey's Debates, vol. iii. p. 35. and vol. v. p. 332.—
Britannia Lanquens, p. 257.

† Esprit du Monde, p. 12 and 103,

and daring spirit by which Henry the Fourth was distinguished are remembered, it is scarcely possible to conceive, that the latter should suffer himself to shrink under the naval force which his neighbours were possessed of; yet we are informed that in the famous embassy made by the Duke of Sully to the court of Britain, the vessel he was on board of, though commanded by a Vice Admiral of France, was obliged to strike its colours to a yacht belonging to England, and to render (as the officers of this little vessel termed it) to the king their master, the honours due to him as sovereign of the sea*.

Reign of
Charles I.

Even the reign of Charles the First is not destitute of circumstances, which prove how much the French dreaded the fleet which England was then possessed of.—For though no engagement took place between the naval armaments of the two nations, yet Cardinal Richelieu confessed the superiority of England, by building a barricado across the entry of the port of Rochelle,

* Letters du Cardinal D'Ossat, tom. ii. p. 238, n. i.—
Deslandes on Maritime Power and Commerce, p. 76.—
Craftsman, No. 155. vol. i. p. 28.

knowing

knowing well, that nothing but such a contrivance, could prevent the English from relieving the besieged in that city, whenever they thought proper*.

Whilst Oliver Cromwell governed these kingdoms, there is not the smallest reason to imagine, that the French had any hopes of rivalling Great Britain at sea.—He who compelled the citizens of a free commonwealth to crouch submissively to his power, would have smiled at the puny efforts of a nation governed by a priest. Indeed it is acknowledged by a very intelligent author, that in the year 1653, the French could not send 10 ships of 50 guns each to sea, whilst the English were able to fit out ten times as many, and of much larger rates †.

Oliver
Cromwell.

It was during the administration of this contemptible monarch of a free people, that the French laid the foundations of their naval strength. Nothing could be superior to the policy of Lewis XIVth. in pursuing his great object of acquiring for his kingdom the advantages of maritime power;

Reign of
Charles II.

* Histoire de France par Millot, vol. iii. p. 206.

† Castell's Political Annals, vol. i. p. 21.

he fomented the division between the two great naval powers of England and of Holland, and alternately joined each of them, with a view of weakening the force of both, and of acquiring skill by supporting their mutual contests. Nor was the experience of his seamen dearly purchased, for care in general was taken, though the French might be numbered among the combatants, that they should have little concern with the fight.

Whilst Charles however sat upon the throne of England, it may not be improper to remark, that such was the high idea entertained of the maritime strength of this country, that he ventured to contend with the united fleets of France and Holland. A bloody battle was fought near St. Christophers with a squadron of the confederates, in which a complete victory was obtained by Sir John Harman with only 16 sail, over 22 sail of the enemy.—This single event, would have established the naval character of the English, had it not since been fortunately eclipsed by still more important victories *.

10th May,
1667.

* Campbell's *Lives of the Admirals*, vol. ii. p. 284.—Our glorious victories over the Dutch, during this reign, come not within the scope of this little treatise.

The short reign of James the Second, Reign of
James II. was conspicuous for great attention to maritime affairs.—That monarch began to repair the fatal errors which his brother had committed. His dissolute and contemptible predecessor, not satisfied with giving every possible naval assistance to his ambitious neighbour, Lewis the XIVth. had even squandered in his own effeminate pleasures, the money which his parliament had voted for the service of the navy.—The monarch whose reign we are now speaking of, acted a very different part.—Unfortunate however in this respect, that with the spirit of a British seaman, he was a slave to his priest, and a tyrant over his people.

The æra of the revolution, is justly considered to be the only period of naval rivalry, between France and England (the present war only excepted); and it is fortunately in our power, to state the actual maritime strength of the two nations, at that æra, on very respectable authority. Reign of
William III.

STATE of the NAVY of FRANCE, anno 1681.

Rate of the Ships.	No.	Guns.	Major Officers.	Marine Officers.	Sailors.	Soldiers.	Whole Crew.
First rate	12	1080	108	1232	4132	2486	7850
Second rate	21	1518	189	1719	4470	2661	8850
Third rate	36	1928	251	2350	6142	3008	11500
Fourth rate	26	1088	156	1167	2713	1570	5450
Fifth rate	20	608	119	681	1427	682	2790
Totals	115	6222	823	7149	18844	10407	36440
Small frigates	24	400	125	446	937	497	1880
Fireships	8	74	16	80	160	—	240
Barca Longas	10	43	20	90	190	—	280
Pinks	22	341	44	190	447	—	637
* Totals	179	7080	1028	7955	20618	10904	39477

Such was the state of the French navy, as given us by Du Tô't, a French author of considerable authority, who affirms, that this was the most flourishing navy that ever France had (*la plus florissante marine que la France ait eue*) †.—I shall next give two lists of the royal navy of England at nearly the same period.

* In this state, galleys are not included.

† *Reflexions Politiques sur les Finances*, tom. ii. p. 374.
This book was written anno 1732.

ABSTRACT

ABSTRACT of the NAVY of ENGLAND,
Anno 1688, according to Mr. Pepys.

Rate of the ships.			Number.	Men.	Guns.
1st. rate	-	-	9	6705	878
2d. rate	-	-	11	7010	974
3d. rate	-	-	39	16545	2640
4th. rate	-	-	41	9480	1980
5th. rate	-	-	2	260	60
6th. rate	-	-	6	420	90
Bombs	-	-	3	120	34
Fireships	-	-	26	905	218
Hoys	-	-	6	22	—
Hulks	-	-	8	50	—
Ketches	-	-	3	115	24
Smacks	-	-	5	18	—
Yatches	-	-	14	353	104
			173	42003	6930

Another account gives the following more favourable state of the Navy of England, at the accession of King William.

Rates.	Number.	
1	9	2 ketches
2	16	3 hoys
3	38	5 smacks
4	44	12 floops
5	13	7 prizes
6	7	[from Barbary.

OF

Of which 5 carried each 100 guns: In all 500

3	-	-	96	-	288
10	-	-	90	-	900
2	-	-	80	-	164
1	-	-	82	-	80
4	-	-	72	-	288
28	-	-	70	-	1960
1	-	-	66	-	66
2	-	-	64	-	128
5	-	-	62	-	310
3	-	-	60	-	180
9	-	-	54	-	486
1	-	-	50	-	50
19	-	-	48	-	912
3	-	-	46	-	138
1	-	-	44	-	44
6	-	-	42	-	252
1	-	-	38	-	38
6	-	-	32	-	192
6	-	-	30	-	180
2	-	-	28	-	56
1	-	-	18	-	18
5	-	-	16	-	80
2	-	-	12	-	24
1	-	-	10	-	10
19	-	-	8	-	252
3	-	-	6	-	18
20	-	-	4	-	80

Total 196

Guns 7594

Any

Any one who will candidly examine the state above given of the navy of France, and the lists produced of the navy of England, will scarcely attribute any superiority to the former.---The number of guns in the two fleets was nearly equal ; and it is to be observed, that the 42,000 men, by whom the fleet of England was manned, consisted of men skilled in maritime affairs; whereas on board the French fleet, no less than 10,000 soldiers were numbered.

Nor is it improper here to remark, that it is questionable whether France, at that period, had so many as 20,000 seamen to assist in manning her fleets.---There are in England, Scotland, and Ireland, says that excellent author Sir William Petty, above 40,000 seamen, but not a quarter so many in France*. And the Abbé of St. Pierre informs us, that though, anno 1688, the King of France could equip 100 sail, yet that there were the greatest scarcity of sailors†.---Nay, Fournier, whose great object was to persuade the world how considerable the French monarch might be at sea, calculates the whole number of sea-

* Petty's Works, p. 259.

† Castet's Political Annals, vol. i. p. 21.

men in France, only at 21,000, both for the royal navy, and for commerce.---If this account is not exaggerated (which Sir William Petty seems to suppose is the case), yet how could twenty out of twenty-one thousand seamen be spared for the navy alone*?

We shall now examine the principal naval exploits of the two countries, during the reign of this active and warlike monarch.

It is recorded as a smart saying of one of the wittiest females of the court of France, in the time of Lewis the XIVth, that since the battle of Actium, no event of very great importance, has taken place at sea: and indeed, though, whilst William sat on the throne of England, there were a number of naval engagements, yet there are but two of magnitude sufficient to be taken notice of in this little treatise: namely, the battles of Beachy-head, and of La Hogue.

The battle of Beachy-head is a strong instance of the advantage which a single ac-

Battle of
Beachy-
head, June
30, 1690.

* Petty's Works, p. 246.

tive

live power enjoys, when opposed to the sluggish operations of a confederacy.—That the Dutch and English had a larger force than France could possibly equip, cannot well be denied : for it appears from Lord Torrington's trial, that he might have had 30 sail more under his command, at the time of the engagement, (which would have rendered him superior to the enemy,) if the English and Dutch admiralities had been as active as they ought to have been, in fitting out their respective fleets*.

It is singular, however, that this glorious victory, so much boasted of by the French, should have proved so unimportant. Notwithstanding the great superiority of force, only six Dutch, and two English ships were sunk or burnt.—The destruction of eight sail in such circumstances is not so very brilliant a victory, nor by any means

* The French fleet amounted to 78 men of war;—the English had 34 in the engagement, and 18 more blocked up in Plymouth, or not ready as was expected.—The Dutch had 22 sail, and 12 more, which ought to have been present.—Thus, by the activity of the French, they had only 36 instead of 86 men of war to contend with.—Barrow's Naval History, vol. ii. p. 237.

of consequence sufficient to decide the empire of the sea.

It ought also to be remarked, that notwithstanding this skirmish, (the burning of a little village excepted,) nothing of any consequence was even attempted by the French; and about the end of August, when they understood that the fleet of the confederates was refitted, they judged it most prudent, notwithstanding their boasted victory, to seek for shelter in their own ports. The ensuing year, the French had a fleet of only 80 sail; whereas admiral Ruffel, with 87 English, and 21 Dutch ships, once more rode triumphant on the ocean*.

With respect to the battle of Beachy-head, it would be ridiculous indeed if a single event of that nature, so unimportant in itself, should be stated as any counter-balance to the various actions which have been so decisively favourable to the arms of Great Britain. In the space of almost 200 years, this is the only event which tends materially to tarnish the lustre of

* Barrow's Naval History, vol. ii. p. 240.

the British flag. It may also be remarked, that this event took place at a time when the nation was distracted by faction at home, and when its sovereign, scarcely seated on the throne of England, was contending for his rights in another kingdom. If the battle of Beachy-head proves that the English are not invincible at sea, it also shows that no inconsiderable superiority is necessary to insure their enemies success.

But the reign of King William is distinguished by another naval engagement, which was attended with the most important consequences. Though conscious of the inferiority of their fleet, the French, vainly trusting to the supposed treachery of some English officers, ventured out of their harbours. Their force amounted to about 50 sail. The English fleet alone was 63 sail, and was supported by 36 Dutch ships. The particulars of the engagement it is unnecessary to dwell upon. Suffice it to say, that 17 sail of the line, from 56 to 104 guns, were totally destroyed *. A naval disaster which the French have never, as yet, been able to recover.

Battle of La
Hogue.

* Davenant's Works, vol. i. p. 408.

In order, however, to prove the great superiority, which the English enjoyed in point of naval success, it may not be improper to give an abstract of the English ships of war taken or destroyed by the French; and those of France taken or destroyed by the English.

English ships, taken or destroyed by the French, in the reign of King William.

No. of Ships.	Guns each,	Total of Guns.
1 of	70	70
1 of	54	54
2 of	48	96
1 of	46	46
3 of	42	126
3 of	36	108
6 of	32	192
2 of	30	60
4 of	24	96
2 of	18	36
2 of	16	32
2 of	12	24
11 of	10	110
5 of	8	40
1 of	6	6
4 of	4	16
Total 50		Total 1112
		French

French ships taken or destroyed.

No. of Ships.	Guns each.	Total of Guns.
2 of - -	104 - -	208
1 of - -	90 - -	90
2 of - -	80 - -	160
3 of - -	76 - -	228
1 of - -	74 - -	74
1 of - -	70 - -	70
1 of - -	68 - -	68
2 of - -	60 - -	120
4 of - -	56 - -	224
1 of - -	50 - -	50
1 of - -	48 - -	48
1 of - -	42 - -	42
1 of - -	40 - -	40
5 of - -	32 - -	160
5 of - -	30 - -	150
5 of - -	28 - -	140
1 of - -	26 - -	26
3 of - -	24 - -	72
3 of - -	20 - -	60
6 of - -	18 - -	108
1 of - -	16 - -	16
2 of - -	12 - -	24
6 of - -	10 - -	60
1 of - -	6 - -	6
Total 59		Total 2244

Thus, it appears, that on the whole, there was a balance in favour of the English, amounting to no less a number than 1132 guns.

But it may be said on this, and on other occasions, how can the English pretend to have the whole glory of these successes, in which the Dutch claim so considerable a share?

The naval assistance of Holland, in this and in other wars, has never been attended with those advantageous consequences which might have been expected.---As we were always the principals in the war, they have ever contrived, that the greatest part of the burden should lie upon us: and there is scarcely an instance of their having, on any one occasion, fulfilled the whole of their engagements.---Had they been active in fitting out their fleets, and had their quotas never been deficient, the fleet of France could not, at any time, have ventured to face the navy of the allies. In the various battles in which they fought in conjunction with the English, their courage shone conspicuous; but they never

had,

had, in any engagement, that proportion to which they were bound by treaty.

Indeed, the opinion of Davenant, the author to whom I before alluded, seems to be founded on sound principles of reasoning, that the naval assistance of the Dutch, on the terms on which it was obtained, was of no service to Great Britain*. In order to have the assistance of 40 Dutch ships, we allowed as many of our own (which we actually possessed) to lie rotting in our harbours, and, in their stead, maintained no less a number than about 40,000 soldiers on the continent†. During King William's wars, the navy cost us 18,061,938*l.* 10*s.*; and during the same space of time, the expence of our armies abroad amounted to 20,982,034*l.* 18*s.* 7*d.* If one million less had been spent every year on a land army, and expended on a fleet, it would have increased it full one third, and rendered our navy so powerful, that, in the words of Davenant, "we might have carried on a war at sea, singly by our own strength." The

* Davenant's Works, vol. i. p. 405.

† Grey's Debates, vol. x. p. 175 and 358.

Dutch,

Dutch, therefore, whilst we paid so dearly for their assistance, are not to be considered in the light of confederates, but of mercenaries, who, receiving our pay, are not entitled to any distinct share in the glory of our conquests.---It may farther be remarked, that (King William's wars only excepted) even in those of Queen Anne, whenever we have had the assistance of the Dutch, that the powerful monarchy of Spain, has always thrown its treasure and its navy into the scale of France, which, even with that additional weight, has never as yet preponderated.

Reign of
Queen Anne.

Ever since the battle of La Hogue, says the Abbé Raynal*, the naval powers of France have been upon the decline; and from that period Great Britain has assumed the superiority. Unfortunately, however, the reign of Queen Anne was more distinguished for its attention to the land, than to the sea-service. The brilliant success of a Marlborough, gave the nation at large a greater zest for military than naval glory; and being completely exhausted by the expence of maintaining great armies of mer-

* Raynal's Hist. vol. iv. p. 400.

cenaries

cenaries abroad, we had but little to lay out on the natural bulwark of Great Britain. On the 13th of August 1704, a battle was fought near Malaga. The strength of the two fleets was nearly equal, and both sides have claimed the victory. It was undoubtedly equivalent to a victory in favour of the English, as it not only prevented the French from giving that assistance to the Spaniards, who were besieging Gibraltar, which was the great object of the armament, but also disabled them from sending any formidable squadron to sea, during the remainder of the war*.

The

* The French fleet, at the battle of Malaga, consisted of 69 sail, of different sizes. The English had 45; the Dutch, only 12 present at the engagement, 6 of their squadron having gone home, as no battle was expected. Had they been present, the fleets would have been exactly equal in point of numbers. No ships were taken on either side. The English and Dutch had 2719 killed and wounded, including 49 officers. The French, no less than 3048 seamen, and 180 officers. Vide Entick's Naval History, p. 648. —Barrow's Hist. vol. iii. p. 79.

It is hoped, that those who are not satisfied with the authority of English writers, will give credit to the account which Voltaire gives us of the battle of Malaga: "Immediatement après la prise de Gibraltar, la flotte Angloise, maitresse de la mer, attaqua a la vue de Malaga le Comte de Toulouse, Amiral de France: bataille indecise a la verite, mais dernier epoque, de la puissance de Louis XIV.

" Depuis

The following is an abstract of the English and French ships taken or destroyed in Queen Anne's war. Considering the numbers lost by England, during that period, by storms and accidents, the balance against the French, must strike every impartial person, as being truly decisive *.

ENGLISH ships lost or taken.

Guns.		Ships.		Total of Guns.
80	-	2	-	160
70	-	4	-	280
60	-	2	-	120
50	-	8	-	400
48	-	1	-	48

"Depuis ce jour on ne vit plus de grandes flottes Françaises, ni sur l'océan, ni sur la Méditerranée. — La marine resta presque dans l'état dont Louis XIV. l'avoit tirée, ainsi que tant d'autres choses éclatantes qui ont sous lui, leur orient, & leur couchant." — *Siecle de Louis XIV.* chap. 20.

It is astonishing to think, that the fleet of England should make such a figure as it did during this reign, considering the great exertions at land, and the number of ships which were lost by hurricanes, or by accident. On the 26th and 27th of November 1703, no less a number than thirteen men of war, with 1519 seamen, were cast away, besides numbers that were dismasted, and otherwise damaged; and when the gallant Shovel was lost on the rocks of Scilly, two sail of the line, a fifty-gun ship, and two other vessels, perished with him.

Guns.	Ships.	Total of Guns.
40	2	80
36	1	36
32	4	128
30	1	30
28	1	28
24	11	264
22	1	22
	<u>38</u>	<u>1596</u>

FRENCH ships lost or taken.

Guns.	Ships.	Total of Guns.
100	4	400
90	8	720
86	8	688
74	1	74
70	3	210
64	1	64
56	1	56
54	4	216
50	2	100
48	1	48
40	1	40
36	2	72
34	1	34
32	1	32
30	2	60
		<u>28</u>

Guns.		Ships.		Total of Guns.
28	-	1	-	28
24	-	8	-	192
20	-	3	-	60
		52		394

Thus it appears that the balance in favour of England, during that war, amounted to 1498 guns, a number nearly equal to the whole loss sustained by the English, both by storms and by the enemy. This list also is exclusive of what Spanish ships were taken or destroyed.

It would be improper, however, to omit remarking, upon this occasion, that whatever might have been the success of our naval operations, during the reign of Queen Anne, yet that there are incontestable evidence of two facts: 1st, That the Dutch continued to be as deficient in furnishing their quotas, as when their own Stadtholder sat upon the throne of England*: and, 2dly,

* Swift, in his pamphlet, entitled, "The Conduct of the Allies," throws out many hints upon this subject. "During King William's wars, he says, the sea was almost entirely neglected, and the greatest part of six millions annually employed to enlarge the frontier of the Dutch:

adly. That notwithstanding that great deficiency, the navy of the allies, if properly conducted, ought always to have enjoyed a considerable superiority in point of number, over the fleets of the enemy.

STATE of the NAVY of the ALLIES during Queen ANNE's Wars.

Years.	English Ships.	Dutch Ships.	Dutch Quota.	Dutch de- ficiency.	Allied Fleet.	Allied fleet according to treaty.
1702	74	38	44	11	107	118
1703	79	22	47	25	101	126
1704	74	18	44	26	92	118
1705	79	20	47	27	99	126
1706	78	15	46	31	93	124
1707	72	27	43	16	99	115
1708	69	25	43	18	94	112
1709	60	11	42	31	71	102
1710	62	13	37	24	75	99
1711	59	12	35	23	71	94†

"Dutch: for the king was a general, and not an admiral;
"and although king of England, was a native of Hol-
"land. In Queen Anne's time, it was the kingdom's
"misfortune, that the sea was not the Duke of Marlbo-
"rough's element, otherwise the whole force of the war,
"would infallibly have been bestowed there, infinitely to
"the advantage of his country." Page 11 and 25.

† Journals of the House of Commons, vol. xvii. p. 48.
28th Jan. 1711.

From this state it appears, that according to treaty, the combined fleet, whilst France pretended to send any considerable squadron to sea, (which was only during the three first years of the war,) always ought to have exceeded one hundred sail; whereas the French could only muster sixty-nine, at the decisive battle of Malaga. What success then might we not have expected, had the Dutch, instead of being deficient in their quotas, proportionally assisted in weakening the common enemy? Nay, they were not only deficient, but when their fleet did appear, it was in the words of Dean Swift, no more than appearing, for they immediately separated to look to their merchants and protect their trade.

Reign of
George the
First.

31st July,
1718.

The reign of George the First did not produce any transaction, of which it is necessary to take particular notice, in this tract. For though it is signalized by the decisive victory obtained on the coast of Sicily, yet the Spanish fleet alone suffered in that fortunate engagement. This period however was distinguished by the laconic epistle written by the famous Walton, in which he informed his admiral, that he had
taken

taken or destroyed as per margin, which margin contained a list of eight Spanish men of war. A few Waltons in our navy would still humble the pride of the house of Bourbon*.

Our superiority at sea was highly conspicuous whilst George the Second sat upon the throne of England. The year 1747 in particular was fatal to the French navy. In one fortunate engagement fought on the 3d of May, the brave Lord Anson captured five sail of the line, a 44 gun ship, and four vessels fitted out as frigates. On the 14th of October, Admiral Hawke was equally successful, having taken five sail of the line, and a 50 gun ship. In both engagements

Reign of George II.

* The Spanish fleet mounted 1284 guns, and had on board 8830 men. The English fleet was stronger, having 1400 guns, and 8885 men. Above one half of the Spanish fleet, mounting 754 guns, were taken or burnt. The gallant Walton's letter is worth copying, as a pattern to modern seamen.

Sir,

We have taken and destroyed all the Spanish ships and vessels, which were upon the coast, as per margin.

I am, &c.

GEORGE WALTON.

Canterbury, off

Syracusa, 16th

August, 1718.

Taken.

Guns.

1 - - 60

1 - - 54

1 - - 40

1 - - 24

Burnt.

1 - - 54

2 - - 40

1 - - 30

with a fire-ship and two bomb-vessels.

STATE

E

the

the English squadrons were greatly superior in number to the enemy, and though the French behaved well, yet in point of skill, discipline, and courage, they also seem to have been inferior*.

Last war.

It is surely unnecessary to enter into a detail of the naval transactions during the war of 1756. They must still live in the memory of every Briton. If Englishmen were accustomed to fight gallantly in former times, during that war they seemed to have surpassed themselves. Of the navy of France, which with the accessions during the course of the war, amounted to 237 ships, 131 were taken by the English; and when the following statement is considered, it will be difficult to conceive how any British lord of the admiralty could afterwards gravely assert in his seat in parliament, "that the fleet of France must ever be superior to that of England, when she chose to bend her whole attention to that particular department."

* Vide Entick's Naval Hist. p. 814. Hill's Naval Hist. p. 704. Sir William Milnam's Political Treatises, particularly his Remarks on the Marine of France, contain some excellent observations upon naval matters, and especially upon the naval transactions of the war that was concluded by the treaty of Aix le Chapelle.

STATE

STATE of the NAVY of FRANCE,
during the War of 1756.

	Ships.	Guns.	Men.
Line of battle -	95		
Frigates -	142		
Taken or destroyed by the English.	237	9682	110,755
Line of battle	47		
Frigates -	84		
	} 131	5278	60,420
Total of the French navy at the peace,			
1763 -	106	4404	50,335*

At the conclusion of the last war, it was generally supposed, in the words of Raynal, "*That Great Britain could balance by its maritime force, the navy of the universe*†." Since that glorious period, how have the mighty fallen! I turn away from the disastrous scenes to which we have been

* Letters concerning the Present State of the French Nation, p. 129. This author supposes, that though 60,420 was the full complement of the ships captured or destroyed by the English, yet that not above 40,000 seamen were actually taken, exclusive of merchantmen. The value of the ships taken by the English, amounted to 5,278,000*l*.

† Raynal's Hist. vol. iv. p. 401.

lately accustomed, to contemplate better prospects.

If our seamen in the first place do not behave gallantly, they seem to me to be without excuse. The future operations of the war, must be principally confined to their element. And on their success in the naval contest in which we are engaged, their own characters, the honour of their profession, and the existence of their country must depend—Considerations which have never failed of producing the most vigorous exertions among that gallant race of men.

In the second place, the directors of our navy must ever be held inexcusable, if in the present state of public affairs, they shall be wanting in their duty. They will naturally avoid those rocks, on which their predecessors were shipwrecked; and as many of them in former times have themselves fought bravely, they surely will not be deficient in pointing out to others the same path to fame.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The king, the parliament, and the people at large, must be truly interested spectators of the naval contest we have entered into ; and the certain prospect of their applause, must rouse the most languid to exertion, and the most spiritless to vigour and activity. It seems necessary however, that some marked and unequivocal demonstration should be given, that the navy is the peculiar and darling favourite of the publick, and the surest road to fame, to fortune, and to glory*.

These are the grounds which induce me, to hope better for the future. For though

* The institution of the *naval order*, or an order of the *marine*, might be attended with the happiest consequences. If the general idea was approved of, it would not be difficult to sketch out the minutiae of such an institution. The colour of the ribbon ought surely to be *white* ; for none should be permitted to wear that honourable mark of distinction, who had not contributed to humble the *white flag* of the House of Bourbon.

Other publick rewards also might be thought of.—For instance, a gallant and successful officer, such as the commander of the *Foudroyant*, might have the privilege of sitting in his uniform under the gallery, with British and Irish peers, when strangers were admitted into the house of commons, and of standing at the steps of the throne, with noblemen's sons, in the house of peers. Such privileges would gratify the natural ambition of gallant men.

our enemies are numerous, and unfortunately united in the great object of humbling the British flag, yet the success of their scheme, must depend fully as much upon our inactivity, as upon their strength. Let us bend our whole attention to the naval department. Let us be firm, steady, and united, and it is still possible, that the war, which at present seems to threaten our own coasts, *may yet be carried into the very havens of our enemies.*

To conclude, if the Author of these sheets has failed in his attempt to refute the noble Lord's assertion, he trusts it will be imputed, not to the weakness of the cause, but to the inability of its literary champion. He should consider himself on the other hand fortunate indeed, if by this simple narrative of facts, he should convince his countrymen, that the trident of Neptune is not as yet wrested from our hands, but that Britain ought still to continue the mistress of the ocean.

THOUGHTS
ON THE
NAVAL STRENGTH
OF THE
BRITISH EMPIRE.

PART II.

TENDING TO POINT OUT WHAT STEPS MIGHT BE
TAKEN AT THIS TIME FOR A SPEEDY AND
EFFECTUAL INCREASE OF THE NAVY.

“ Nec tamen hæ clades, defectionesque sociorum moverunt,
“ et pacis unquam mentio apud Romanos fieret; neque ante
“ consulis Romam adventum, nec postquam is rediit, renova-
“ vitque memoriam acceptæ cladis: quo in tempore, ipso adeo
“ magno animo civitas fuit, ut consuli ex tanta clade, cujus
“ ipse causa maxima fuisset, redeunti, et obviam itum, fre-
“ quenter ab omnibus ordinibus sit, *et gratiæ actæ quod de re-*
“ *publica non desperasset.*”

TIT. LIV. L. xxii. c. 61.

[Originally printed anno 1782.]

THOUGHTS

NAVAL STRENGTH

BRITISH EMPIRE

OF THE

PART I

Tending to point out what may be
done at this time for a ready and
effective increase of the Navy.

The first object to be considered is
the state of the Navy at present.
It is found that the Navy is
in a state of decay, and that
the ships are old and the
crew is inefficient. It is
therefore necessary to take
steps to improve the Navy
at once.

The first step to be taken is
to increase the number of ships.
This can be done by building
new ships and by purchasing
foreign ships.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

First Edition of PART II.

ON a former occasion, I ventured to communicate to the Public, such observations as occurred to me, relative to the natural advantages possessed by Great Britain, for the acquisition of naval power; with a short account of the principal gallant actions, which, prior to the commencement of the last war, had been performed at sea by the natives of this country.

It has since occurred, that it might not be an improper subject of investigation, to inquire how far the obstacles, which are commonly urged against any farther increase of our navy,

navy, namely, the supposed difficulty of procuring more ships and more seamen, are well founded: And, as examining such a question, cannot possibly do any harm; and as some ideas may be thrown out, which, in the hands of abler and more experienced men, may be attended with service to the public; I was induced to hazard the following addition to the former publication.

It has since occurred, that it might not be an improper subject of investigation, to inquire how far the objections, which are commonly urged against any farther increase of our navy.

THOUGHTS
ON THE
NAVAL STRENGTH
OF THE
BRITISH EMPIRE.
PART II.

THE reports which have been lately circulating of an approaching peace, induced me to examine a very curious and important political paper, intitled "AN HISTORICAL MEMORIAL OF THE NEGOTIATION OF FRANCE AND ENGLAND, FROM THE 26th MARCH TO THE 20th SEPTEMBER, 1761." It is translated from a French original, which was published by the court of France, with a view of proving, that every step was taken at that

that time, consistent with the dignity of an independent power, to procure an accommodation. The splendid success which had attended the arms of Great Britain, and the low state to which France was reduced, are too well known to require any particular recital. Yet the memorial alluded to (near the conclusion) contains this judicious and well-founded observation. “ They who
 “ talk so readily, and upon all occasions,
 “ that *we must make peace*, do not consider
 “ that however well disposed a sovereign
 “ may be for the re-establishment of tran-
 “ quillity, his desire cannot be effectual, but
 “ when it is equally sincere on the part of
 “ the other belligerent powers.”

To find such a sentiment held forth by a French courtier and statesman (for the Duke de Choiseul subscribes the memorial) at a moment when France was reduced to the very brink of destruction; and to hear, on the other hand, the mean and pusillanimous manner in which the citizens of this free country are too apt at present to express themselves, I confess, fills me with equal grief and astonishment. That peace is at this time a desirable object, to a country that
 has

has been so long engaged in a war, unattended with many prosperous events, no man is more willing to allow : but that we are as yet reduced to a state that ought to make us wish for peace on any terms, however degrading and humiliating, is a tenet which every man, who sincerely wishes the glory and prosperity of his country, ought strenuously to oppose. The most valuable acquisitions may be too dearly purchased; and it is probable that those who so loudly exclaim for peace, are ignorant of the terms which are demanded by the enemy, and the state to which they are reduced, and also unacquainted with the plans which it is in our power to pursue, together with the resources still in our possession.

The terms demanded by the enemy, I have no access to be better acquainted with, than any other private individual; but it is generally understood, that, in addition to American independence; in addition to the renunciation of Grenada, of Minorca, and of our former settlements in the Gulph of Honduras; in addition to the evacuation of New York and of Charlestown; in addition to the restoration of Pondicherry, of
St.

St. Lucia, and of every other French and Dutch settlement we have acquired; and in addition to the surrender of Gibraltar, and, for ought that I know, of Jamaica, that other terms, equally disgraceful and ruinous, either have been, or are to be demanded. The British flag must no longer be revered in the British seas; nor will our enemies be satisfied, unless the act of navigation itself is annihilated, the boasted source of our former splendor and prosperity*. He who is willing to accept of peace

* See the address of thanks to the Great Council of Leyden, in the collection of state papers, relating to the first acknowledgement of the sovereignty of the United States of America, by the States General of the United Netherlands, of which the following is an extract: "The difficulties that oppose themselves to a partial pacification between Great Britain and Holland, are too multiplied to be suddenly removed. Such as the restoration of the possessions taken from the States, &c. &c. &c. The annihilation, if possible, of the act of navigation, an act which carries too evident marks of the supremacy asserted by England over all other maritime people, not to attract attention at the approaching negotiation of peace; finally, the necessity of breaking the yoke that Great Britain would impose on our flag, to make her's respected in the Northern Ocean, as the seat of her maritime empire, and other objects of this nature, which, as the petulant proceedings of the court of London have given rise to them, will certainly furnish matter for claims and negotiations."

on such terms as these, must not for a moment have considered to what a wretched state such a treaty would reduce us.

Allow me also to enquire of those who are anxious for peace on any terms, what is the situation of those powers at whose feet we are to crouch? The state of France is well known. With a fleet which nothing but a peace can re-establish, and which, if re-established, must render any peace short-lived and precarious, and with her finances in such disorder, that her creditors are every moment dreading that their property will be attacked. Will Spain be long able to continue the war, baffled and dispirited as she is by the failure of her attempts on Gibraltar, and compelled, for want of specie, to borrow half a million of money from the Dutch, and to transport it by land to Spain at a considerable risk and expence*? The distracted state of Holland, and her incapacity to carry on the war, every packet from the continent evinces; and before this time it is more than probable that the congress of America may regret the haughty manner in

* The paper issued by the Spanish government is already at a discount of 14 per cent. and is likely soon to become like the paper dollars of America.

which they have rejected the pacific overtures of this country.

The situation also of Europe in general, with respect to grain, must soon diminish the insolence of our enemies, and render them truly desirous of obtaining peace, upon terms of which we need not be ashamed to accept. The price of grain in France (which, it is well known, is the principal food of the inhabitants of that country) is already double to what it was last year, and will still be dearer *. Whereas, fortunately, it is only in respect of barley and oats, and not of wheat, that the crop of England is deficient. But wherever the deficiency may be, whether in this country, in France, in Spain, or in Holland, it is well known that the greatest part of the supply must be procured from the Baltic; and the following state of the commerce of that sea, for three years preceding 1782, will, it is hoped, clearly prove, that we have no reason to dread a scarcity on our part, (if

* Flour at Bourdeaux, is at present, 29 livres per cwt. the current price last year was only 14 livres; and the price at present in London, is 18 shillings, or about 21 livres. The difference in our favour, considering every circumstance, is very great.

it can be procured by trade with the Baltic,) whatever may be the situation and fortune of our enemies.

List of Ships that passed the Sound to and from the Baltic, for three Years preceding 1782.

NATION.	Ships in 1779.		Ditto in 1780.		Ditto in 1781.
British	1651	—	1701	—	2001
Bremeners	125	—	146	—	228
Dantzickers	196	—	174	—	220
Danes	1353	—	1341	—	1610
Spaniards	8	—	—	—	—
Flemish	16	—	30	—	92
Genoese	2	—	—	—	—
Hamburghers	31	—	31	—	54
Dutch	2075	—	2058	—	9
Lubeckers	74	—	82	—	84
Prussians	529	—	671	—	1584
Portuguese	20	—	21	—	40
Rostockers	64	—	104	—	86
Russians	62	—	50	—	117
Swedes	1987	—	1880	—	2176
Courlanders	—	—	—	—	10
Venetians	—	—	2	—	1
	8193		8291		8312

It is hoped that this account, the authenticity of which may be depended upon, will be some comfort to those who are perpetually dreading that our commerce is totally annihilated: and it is a singular circumstance to see our trade increasing from 1651 to 2001 ships, notwithstanding the war we are engaged in, whilst in the same space of time, the Dutch are reduced from 2075 to only 9 sail.

As to the plan that ought to be adopted, it may not be improper, shortly, to state the different objects which it is in our power to pursue.

The war in America has proved so unsuccessful, and every attempt to achieve the conquest of that country has been attended with such calamitous circumstances, that no minister will probably be found bold enough to propose the renewal of so inauspicious an attempt: but as some posts on the continent may possibly be still retained, and as the whole future fortune of the war will depend upon the choice that is made of a post on that continent, it is necessary in a peculiar manner to investigate what place ought to

be

be pitched upon : more especially as New York seems at present to be the favourite spot, a place in many respects so ill calculated for the purpose.

Indeed our having made New York the first object of our attack, has proved a principal source of our misfortunes in America. That continent was only vulnerable in its extremities. Whilst we attacked the colonies in the *centre* of their empire, it was in their power, with much greater ease than otherwise could have been done, to assemble men from every corner of the continent to supply them with provisions, and to furnish them with every necessary article of war. Whereas if Charlestown had been our first object in America, we must very speedily have obtained the possession of the province of which that city is the capital, and might have gradually gone on leaving no enemy behind us until we had either regained the possession of the whole continent, or at least secured to ourselves the southern colonies, which are by far the most valuable.

If New York or Charlestown also must be evacuated, there is reason to imagine

that Charlestown is the fittest place for being our strong-hold in America. One half of the troops now at New York, if added to the present garrison at Charlestown, would be put in possession of the whole province of South Carolina, and insure to us some of the most lucrative branches of the American trade*. Charlestown also is a place which may be rendered impregnable; whereas New York must always be vulnerable to the attacks of a skilful and of an active enemy. If it is necessary therefore for the character of the nation, which I consider it to be, that an asylum should be kept up at *any reasonable expence*, for the unfortunate loyalists of America, until the present troubles are settled, Charlestown is undoubtedly the spot which ought to be pitched upon.

* The well-informed author of the Political Essays, printed into quarto anno 1782, has given us the following state of the export staples from our different colonies anno 1764, which fully proves the amazing value of the two Carolinas.

The amount of the West-India exports	£. 2,702,060
Those of the two Carolinas, &c.	— 722,700
Those of the tobacco colonies	— 357,228
Those of the northern settlements	— 98,562
	£. 3,880,550

It ought also to be observed, that Charlestown is particularly well calculated for the exportation of grain, rice, pitch, tar, and other articles which we require.

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The only advantage which New York enjoys over Charlestown is, that it answers better as a port to shelter our men of war, particularly our West India squadron in the hurricane season, and enables us (as it is said) more effectually to distress the commerce of the colonies.

With regard to shelter for our ships of war, the port of Halifax is much better calculated than either for that important purpose. In the words of Abbé Raynal, that port may be called *the natural rendez-vous* of both the land and sea forces which Great Britain may think herself obliged to maintain in America, either for the defence of her sugar islands or the protection of her fisheries. Halifax has none of those natural obstructions to which the harbour of New York is subjected*, and has also advantages, in regard to masts and timber, which render it in every respect a fitter place for being a maritime arsenal. As to distressing the trade of the colonies, two or three additional cruizers would do that more

* There is no bar at Halifax, nor is it ever incommoded with ice, which is far from being the case with New York. Besides Halifax, an excellent harbour might be found at Port Royal in South Carolina.

effectually, than can ever be expected from the possession of New York: at any rate, so many millions per annum would be very idly expended, if it only answered the purpose of providing a port for our cruizers, and a lurking place for our privateers.

If instead of Charlestown, therefore, New York were fortunately and expeditiously evacuated, we should soon make a very different figure from what has lately been the case. If the garrison of New York, Long Island, &c. including the armed and disciplined refugees, amounting to 20,000 men: and if with five of these, and with the 7000 men now in Charlestown, or, in other words, with a body of 12,000 soldiers, we could retain the possession of Charlestown, and acquire the dominion of the province of South Carolina, it is evident that there would remain 15,000 men to be employed in defending our West-India islands, or in attacking the settlements of our enemies: a force which, if properly made use of, would soon turn the tide of our affairs.

If in consequence also of the unreasonable demands of our enemies, we are obliged to persevere

persevere for some time longer in the present war, were the plan above stated pursued, the war would not be so ruinously expensive as it is at present. Our troops might be maintained by the grain and rice of Carolina, nor would it be necessary to transport provisions from this country for their subsistence. Our armies would not require to be attended by such a number of vessels as they at present demand; a service which employs many thousands of the prime of our seamen. Our navy would not be eternally occupied in conveying provisions to our armies, instead of being employed, as they ought to be, in humbling the naval armaments of our enemies: and lastly our troops, instead of being cooped up in some little insignificant spots, from whence no real advantage can be obtained, if sent to attack the possessions of our enemies, would soon acquire glory to themselves, and territories to their country.

As to a defensive war in America, retaining the possession of New York, garrisoned by an expensive army of 20,000 men, there cannot be, in every respect, a more contemptible idea. It would be better to as-

semble every soldier we have in America, from Quebec, Charlestown, &c. to one spot, to search for the army of the United States, wherever they were posted, and to attack them even in their entrenchments, with the ancient spirit of British soldiers, firmly resolving either to be masters of the whole continent, or totally to abandon it. A defensive war, if it should cost nothing, disgraces the nation by whom it is carried on : but a defensive war, that would be more expensive than the most active campaign recorded in the history of this country, no wise man can possibly approve of. It would soon be put an end to, by the spirit and opposition of parliament, or by the indignation of the people.

Some, however, are of opinion that the continent of North America, at least the Thirteen United Provinces, ought to be totally abandoned : and though I have ventured to suggest the plan which might be pursued, were the contrary system to take place, yet I confess that the total dereliction of that continent does not appear to me an impolitic idea ; at least if the report is well founded, that no compensation will be given
for

for evacuating New York, or Charlestown (because the independance of the whole thirteen provinces is the basis of the confederacy, and they have no possession belonging to us which they can give us in return). Whereas if we can conquer any of the colonies of France or Spain, we are surely entitled to retain them, or, when peace is concluded, to obtain an adequate compensation.

If the other branches of the confederacy, therefore, were to be attacked, one or other of the following plans might be adopted. We might either attack the West India colonies of France, none of which would be able to resist the efforts of a spirited attack; and, heavy as the charges of the war have been, there is every reason to believe that we could conquer possessions from that nation, whose value would nearly repay the expenses we have been put to*: or, if France is thought to be an enemy whose colonies can-

* The value of the French West India islands will sufficiently appear, from the following state of the ships that were sent to them from France, anno 1776: namely, to St. Domingo, 353; to Guadaloupe, 88; to Martinique and St. Lucia, 141; total, 582; besides 58 vessels sent to the coast of Africa with slaves.

not easily be mastered, we are likely to find the continental possessions of Spain a very easy acquisition. There is little reason to expect much resistance from the natives (if in many provinces they would not fly to our aid); and it is not probable the hardened veterans who are now in America, would perish in the manner which those raw troops have in general done, who have been sent on such expeditions. The possession of almost any province in that part of the world, would enable us to acquire the greatest part of the trade of Spanish America, and would amply compensate for the treasure we have lost.

But there is one plan, which, though we were reduced to a state ever so desperate, it will always be in our power to pursue; and that is, to support, in conjunction with the other powers in Europe, and in particular with the armed neutrality, a system of *a general colonial emancipation*. If the colonies of France, and more especially if those of Spain, were open to our manufactures, we should have the greatest reason to rejoice at the independance of America. Indeed a general colonial emancipation would be a fortunate

fortunate conclusion of the present war, both for this country, and for mankind: those rich and fertile provinces, which South America contains, have too long groaned under the dominion of the proud and sluggish Spaniard, and might soon wear a new face, were they opened to the exertions and industry of this country, and of Europe. To question whether the different powers of the European continent would support such a system, is to doubt of their being possessed of common ambition, or indeed of common sense: for were the House of Bourbon to retain its colonies entire, whilst Great Britain lost hers, every one must perceive, that the safety and independance of Europe in general would be greatly endangered.

But it is full time to give up such general topics, and to advert to the original object of this publication, which is, to point out means which may be pursued, at this time, for the increase of our fleets; and how we may speedily and efficaciously make use of the great resources we are in possession of, for the acquisition of naval power. In particular, it is proposed to refute two common objections: that it is difficult to procure

cure men to man the ships we have; and still more difficult to build more ships, were they necessary for the public service. The first will require a short investigation into the nature and constitution of the naval department.

I. Procuring Seamen.

THE business of the board of admiralty may be divided into five separate branches.

The first branch relates to the building and equipping of his Majesty's ships: the second, to the procuring seamen: the third, to the providing a sufficient supply of wholesome provisions: the fourth, to the arrangement and promotion both of the superior and inferior officers: and the last, to the proper destination of the fleet, when prepared for service, and the obtaining authentic intelligence of the naval plans and operations of the enemy.

On account of the great variety and multiplicity of the business above stated, it has been found necessary to establish two subordinate boards for the first and third branches
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(known by the names of the Navy and Victualling boards); and perhaps it is the greatest defect in the present mode of conducting the naval business of this country, that there is not a subordinate board also for the second branch, namely, that of procuring seamen, which is not the least important or difficult of the whole. Were subordinate boards established for the three first branches, it is evident that the controuling board of admiralty itself might conduct the two remaining ones, without having more business upon its hands than it is possible for it to execute.

The want of such a subordinate board having rendered the manning of his Majesty's ships a very difficult operation, it has given rise to an innumerable variety of plans for procuring seamen. In the reign of King William, a register for a certain number of seamen was actually established by act of parliament; though, after some trial, it was given up. Some very curious and important resolutions of the same tendency also were entered into by the house of commons, in the year 1740; and a Bill, on ideas of a very similar nature, has been lately brought
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into the house by a very respectable member (Sir Herbert Mackworth), and may possibly come under the discussion of the house in the course of this session.

Though the worthy Baronet, who has moved for this Bill, has brought it to the greatest degree of perfection of which it is capable, and is entitled to the highest praise for the zeal and public spirit which he has shewn upon that, and upon many other occasions, yet there is too much reason to imagine, that it is founded upon principles which it is scarcely possible to carry into execution.

For, in the first place, though the Bill in question sets out with the laudable intention of procuring the voluntary service of seamen, yet whoever knows any thing of the character of English sailors, must be sensible that it is impossible that any great proportion of them can be inclined to expose themselves to the dangers, and to the severe discipline of his Majesty's service, whilst they can get larger pay and more liberty, with less hazard, in the service of a merchant. Unless the nature of our seamen,
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therefore, were to be totally altered, or unless the merchant service were to become less eligible, it is impossible to suppose that 100,000 seamen, the number now voted by parliament, could be procured, without the assistance of compulsion.

In the second place, though the Bill, by a tax upon all the shipping in the kingdom, according to their tonnage, and by other means, proposes to raise a fund sufficient to defray the expences of the proposed institution; and though, in this manner, no part of the public revenue, as it now stands, will be absorbed; yet in fact it ought to be considered, that it does the same thing, by taking to itself a source of taxation, which might be appropriated for other purposes; and for which, as well as for many more, the public has ample occasion.

In the third place, it is apprehended, that the various remote pecuniary advantages, in case of wounds or accidents, which are held forth in the Bill with a view of inciting sailors to enter into the fellowship, and voluntarily to go on board of his Majesty's ships, would be a great expence to the public,
without

without any adequate advantage. Experience sufficiently proves, that men are in general attentive only to present advantages; and of all men, that seamen are the most heedless with respect to distant emolument. When the young sailor and soldier resolve to enter into the service of the public, it is not wounds and danger, it is not broken limbs, or the trifling advantage of being a Greenwich or Chelsea pensioner, which they have in view, but glory, plunder, and preferment: and it is firmly believed, that all the advantages which are proposed in the Bill, would not add as many sailors to his Majesty's fleet, as would man the smallest vessel in the service. It is not proposed by this to insinuate, that old or disabled sailors and soldiers are not entitled, in a certain degree, to the bounty of the public: justice and humanity plead equally in their behalf: but it is intended to refute, or at least to deny, the fundamental principle of the Bill, which is this, that distant or future emoluments can ever be of any considerable advantage, in procuring a sufficient number of able seamen to enter voluntarily into the service.

But were there a better prospect than there is of the plan in question succeeding, and were it liable to fewer weighty objections, yet it would surely be very dangerous, at such a time as this, to think of making such an experiment; in particular, as it might give our seamen some reason to imagine, that they are entitled to more advantages than they at present possess; and might instil into their minds a new idea, that it was hard, however pressing the necessities of the state might be, to compel them to serve in the navy. And as, in fact, the plan is nothing else (however much it may be disguised by such terms as Voluntary Register, or Fellowship of Seamen, &c.) but the establishment of a board, subordinate to the board of admiralty, for the purpose of manning the navy, the following plan, founded upon safer and sounder principles, with the same desirable object in view, is with great deference suggested.

In the first place, it is proposed, that the second branch of the board of admiralty, namely, that of procuring seamen, should be put under the management of a third subordinate board, to be called THE MA-

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RINE BOARD, to consist of five commissioners, a secretary, clerks, &c. who shall conduct that branch of the naval business of this country, under the controul and direction of the admiralty.

In the second place, it is proposed, that instead of those regulating captains and press-gangs, which are at present spread along the coasts of the island, (who, when idle, are a useless and heavy expence to the state; or, when they do procure men for the service, deter other sailors from voluntarily entering, by the violent and outrageous manner in which they conduct themselves,) that subordinate officers to the said marine board shall be established in all the different districts of the kingdom, so that every part of the island may be under the inspection of some one or other of these officers.

In the third place, it is proposed, that the said board, and its subordinate officers, shall be obliged to furnish the admiralty, from time to time, with an exact and authentic account of the number of seafaring people in all the different districts of the kingdom; who,

who, for that purpose, shall be compelled, under certain penalties, to give in their names, and places of abode, to the marine officer appointed to receive them: shall transmit also, with as much expedition as possible, to their proper place of rendezvous, the fair proportion of seamen which each district is ordered to supply: and lastly, shall give every possible assistance to the seamen belonging to their district, for procuring their pay, their effects, or their share of prize-money to themselves, their family, or relations.

It would also in a particular manner be the duty of this board, and of its subordinate officers, to point out what steps ought to be taken, in order to increase the number of sailors in their respective districts: and more especially, how nurseries of seamen might be brought up all along the extended coasts of this island. It ought to be a rule with them, as it is a law in France, never to cut down or send off an old tree, without planting a young one in its stead. It was by means of placing apprentices and supernumerary men on board of merchantmen, that Lewis XIV. was able to rear the navy

that he did: and if, during the progress of this war, care had been taken to put a number of apprentices on board of merchantmen, to supply the deficiency of sailors in that service, occasioned by the numbers taken into the pay of the public, what a gallant troop of young and able seamen would by this time have been ready for the state! We should not, in that case, have had our ports filled with foreign seamen, but the commerce of England would have been almost totally carried on by the natives of this country. From the accounts laid before parliament, it appears that no less a number than 20,000 foreign seamen entered the ports of Great Britain only, exclusive of Ireland, from the first of January 1781, to the first of January 1782.

It would also be proper that this board, and its subordinate officers, should be obliged to furnish the admiralty, from time to time, with an exact account of the number of SHIPWRIGHTS in the kingdom, lest a greater number was required for the King's yards, than could be procured without compulsion. For it must be observed, that shipwrights were formerly pressed, as well

as seamen, into the public service, and are fully as necessary.

The manner in which the men are intended to be raised in each district, will appear sufficiently evident from the following sketch.

In the first place, each subordinate officer must endeavour to raise the number of men wanted in each district, by beating up for volunteers; and by offering the highest bounty, which it is supposed the public can afford. If that is not sufficient, and the number cannot be procured, they ought, in the second place, to be directed to lay an embargo upon all vessels, of every size and denomination, including even fishing boats, until the proportion of seamen is furnished. And thirdly, if the number is not yet made up, they shall next proceed, in the presence of two or more justices of the peace in the neighbourhood, to cast lots, which of the seamen in the district shall be compelled to serve: and, in case of their refusal, shall be empowered, not by means of press-gangs, which is a barbarous mode of compulsion, and gives our seamen a distaste

of the service, but by means of the civil, and, if necessary, the military power of the state, to compel such as refuse voluntarily to go: and shall publish rewards for apprehending such as attempt to secrete themselves. Each of these seamen thus compelled by lot, shall not be obliged to serve for above three or five years, (peculiar exigencies excepted,) unless, in consequence of a larger bounty, they become bound to continue in the service for a longer space of time.

One observation must be added respecting this part of the subject, namely, that the most admirable effects may be expected to result from partial embargoes. When every district knew, that procuring a number of sea-faring people for the public service, would insure it protection for the remainder, and full liberty of employing their seamen, fishermen, &c. in any manner they chose, the greatest exertions might be expected. Every description of men; the merchant for the sake of his trade; the rich for the sake of procuring delicacies for their tables, and the poor for the sake of employment, (which would be diminished by the embargo upon trade,) would be interested

interested in procuring the necessary supply as speedily as possible : and the sailor himself, to make use of an odd expression, would be voluntarily compelled, for the sake of personal maintenance, to enter into the service. If an embargo indeed was laid upon vessels of every size and denomination, it is improbable that it would ever be necessary to resort to any kind of compulsion : at least the Dutch, who allow no pressing, have always found an embargo a sure mode of manning their navy, whatever might be the number of ships which it was necessary to fit out.

Lastly, it is farther proposed that some subordinate officers should be established even in the inland parts of the country, where, in time of war, many of our sailors fly for shelter, whom, as well as the watermen, bargemen, &c. who usually reside there, it would be proper to look after. By means of such officers, also apprentices for the sea service might be procured from the most inland counties, which are at present of little service for rearing seamen.

As to the use of such an establishment, the expence of it would be amply repaid by furnishing the admiralty with authentic in-

formation respecting the exact number of sea-faring people in the kingdom : and the proportion which each district is able to afford : and notwithstanding the loud complaints which we have heard of the scarcity of sailors, there is reason to believe that there are at least 100,000 sea-faring people, including fishermen, bargemen, &c. not at present in his Majesty's service : from thence it must appear that it is not owing to the want of seamen, but to the want of proper management, that there is any deficiency in manning our ships. We have the materials, but we have not provided the workmen, or the machines necessary for making such valuable materials useful.

That there are at least 100,000 sea-faring people not at present in his Majesty's service, there is the greatest reason to believe. From the accounts laid before parliament, it appears that from the 1st Jan. 1781 to the 1st Jan. 1782, there were entered into the ports of England and Scotland no less a number than 4141 British ships, manned by 31,944 British sailors, exclusively of the master : and if the trade of Ireland requires above 8000 sailors, which is a very mode-

rate calculation, there are at least 40,000 real seamen in the service of individuals. It is commonly calculated that there are 40,000 watermen, bargemen, &c. employed from Windsor to Gravesend; but we shall state the men employed in all the different rivers and canals of Great Britain and Ireland at that number: and it will not probably be accounted too high a calculation to suppose that 20,000 fishermen are employed in boats along the extended coasts of this island, or have secreted themselves in the country, and given up their former mode of living, from the terror of being pressed.

Indeed it would be no inconsiderable advantage attending the establishment which is proposed, that it would put an end to the present enormous expence of the impress service, of which the following is an accurate account, from the 1st October 1780 to the 1st October 1781.

	£.	s.	d.
For the impress service on } shore in Great Britain	124,229	15	0
Ditto in Ireland —	10,936	10	1
Ditto in tenders at sea	78,879	13	3
	£.214,045	18	4
	Such		

Such was the expence of procuring only 7081 seamen, one half of whom would take the earliest opportunity of deserting. Whereas the same account states, that in the same space of time 8844 seamen and landmen entered voluntarily, whose bounty only amounted to 29,433 £ . 10s.

A variety of more minute observations might be made; but these are sufficient to explain the general tendency of a plan which could not be attended with much expence to the state; and which, if it answered the intention, must prove of the greatest national utility. It would at least prevent the odious custom of pressing almost every person indiscriminately, which has so long been the opprobrium of this country. It would furnish as many sailors now employed in pressing, as would man, with the assistance of marines and of landmen, no less a number than five sail of the line, from 2 to 3000 men being generally employed in that service, and these amongst the ablest of our seamen.

The following account, which was laid before Parliament, will inform the reader how

how many seamen were employed in the impress service, from the 1st October 1780 to the 1st October 1781.

	Captains.	Lieut.	Masters.	Petty Offic.	Men.	Total.
Officers and men employed on shore in Great Britain.	27	100	—	205	1162	1494
Ditto in Ireland.	3	5	—	10	78	96
Ditto at sea in tenders.	—	44	57	185	968	1254
	30	149	57	400	2208	2844

But it may be said that the plan does not exclude all ideas of compulsion; for that sailors may still be pressed, though undoubtedly in a less odious manner by the civil power, or even by the military who are kept under some kind of regular discipline, than by the usual mode of pressing gangs, who when on land think themselves totally exempted from every species of controul: to which some will probably add, that every kind of compulsion is impolitic in itself, and contrary to the principles of that free constitution which we so much glory to enjoy.

That the citizens of every free state, and of England in particular, are entitled to the enjoyment

enjoyment of as much liberty as is consistent with the existence of government, no man is more ready to allow or more anxious to support: but such extensive liberty it is evident is only suited to times of peace and tranquillity; and when war rages, must be necessarily diminished. In fact, in time of war, the free citizen can hardly enjoy much more personal liberty than the subjects of that power with whom his country is at variance: and if that power can compel all its subjects to take arms, or all its sailors to enter on board its ships of war, the citizens of the free state must be subjected to the same hardship; otherwise they must run the risque of being conquered by their enemies, and of losing for ever, both in peace and in war, every franchise and liberty which they possess.

In the second place it may be urged, that on every principle of political society, there is no hardship in compelling any one to serve the state in the manner in which he can prove of the greatest public utility, provided he is maintained at the public expence in the manner to which his station entitles him: and the reason that real sailors are alone subject, to what is commonly

monly called that species of oppression, is, that none but real sailors can so well answer the purposes of the state at sea. Were it otherwise, it would be surely reasonable that every landman in the kingdom should be liable to the same system of compulsion. The bad policy of the present plan of pressing is, that no man knows when he is to go; that he may be dragged from the ship he belongs to, and may lose the pay he earned, and the little effects belonging to him, without any legal authority: nay, that he is liable every moment to be torn from his own home, may be obliged to leave his family, without knowing how they are to be supported, and may find himself treated rather as a felon than as a subject, and a free one too, ought to be used, and all without the possibility of redress: whereas if no sailor or sea-faring persons were compelled to serve but by the civil authority of the state, if he had sufficient warning given him, and an opportunity afforded of settling his own little affairs before he entered into the service; if he received his wages regularly, and enjoyed the full advantage of sending any part of them to his family or his friends; if he was certain to receive, when on board, good and

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 wholesome

wholesome provisions; if his service were not to exceed a certain limited time; were his officers under an obligation of treating him well, and were all prize-money to be more equally distributed, no English sailor would have any just reason to regret having contributed his assistance to save his country, and to humble her enemies.

But if, notwithstanding every attempt of this nature, it is still found difficult to procure a sufficient number of seamen, we must in that case, imitate the example originally set us in the reign of King William, by which five thousand men, included in the estimate of guards and garrisons, were employed on board the fleet. Nay, on the 3d of February 1701, the House addressed his Majesty to interpose with his allies, that they should increase their quotas of *land forces to be put on board the fleet*, in proportion to the numbers his Majesty shall have on board his fleet. If the same system is carried to a proportionable extent at this time, joined to the considerable assistance that Ireland has given us, we can hardly want a sufficient number of men for the manning of our navy.

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We shall next inquire, how far procuring ships can be accounted an insurmountable obstacle.

II. Building Ships.

The plan that was proposed of building ships by voluntary subscription, having failed, it is undoubtedly a desirable circumstance to have some other mode pointed out of encreasing the number of our ships; more especially as an ardent desire is now prevalent in the whole nation to make our navy truly respectable; for it was not from want of inclination that the different counties in England, who assembled for that purpose, did not vote a ship of war adequate to the property they contained, but because no plan was suggested that appeared entitled to general approbation.

The plan of voluntary contributions is certainly in this respect defensible, that it furnishes public-spirited individuals, and also great and wealthy corporate bodies, with an opportunity of displaying their zeal for the interest of their country; and they tend so much to prove the resources and the strength

strength of a nation, as frequently to damp the courage and spirit of its foes. Indeed had a general aid of that nature been given by the public, when so glorious an example was shewn by the East-India Company, (after our late successes at sea, with the addition which that would have afforded,) it would have been in our power at this time to have dictated the terms of peace.

As to the objection, that voluntary aids to the Crown are contrary to the principles of this constitution, however respectable they may be who maintain such an opinion, I find little difficulty in giving a very different judgment upon the question. God forbid that British subjects should not be at full liberty to do what they please with their own property, provided they make use of it in a manner unprohibited by any known law! By voluntary contributions many nations have been saved from the most imminent danger of destruction. But it will be difficult to produce a single example of any kingdom that has been ruined by the free, uncompulsive, pecuniary contributions of its inhabitants.

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But the solid objection to such subscriptions is, that they are unequal, and that, though some pay more than they would probably be taxed at, yet that there are many who, from various motives, perhaps from dislike to those by whom the plan is set on foot, or perhaps from disinclination to part with their money, are not fond of encouraging such a scheme: it becomes therefore necessary, since voluntary subscriptions have failed, to point out some other means, by which not only the navy may be speedily increased at present, but which may prove an example, to have recourse to in future periods of equal danger and distress.

The great difficulty is, how to raise a sum of money proportionate to the real income of each individual. The customs, the excise, stamps, &c. are already appropriated. The inequality of the land-tax is a general subject of complaint; and it is a tax from which the opulent stockholder is exempted. The taxes on servants and carriages, are of too partial and confined a nature to answer the purpose. It remains therefore only to discover, whether a small duty upon houses, exempting all those that are uninhabited or

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possessed by the poor; would not raise a sum sufficient for building 50 ships of war, without laying a duty upon any house which its possessor could not very easily afford. By raising the tax also not in one, but in the space of three years, it will prove less burdensome to those (if there are any such) who may find it inconvenient to pay their proportion; and would give others an opportunity of shewing their public spirit, by paying in at once the whole duty at which they are rated.

By a small duty upon houses, which would be cheerfully paid for so popular a purpose, I have no doubt, that the following sums might be raised, and the following ships built with them:

STATE of the SHIPS proposed to be built, with the following sums, on the supposition, that every district that pays from 20 to 30,000 *l.* is to have one or more sail of the line, in proportion to the sum it pays, *named after it*, or in any other manner it may recommend; all above 15,000 *l.*, a 50-gun ship; all above 10,000 *l.*, a 44, or 32-gun frigate; all above 5,000 *l.*, a 24-gun frigate; and all under 5,000 *l.*, sloops, &c.

Districts.	Sums proposed to be raised in each District in 3 Years.	Rate proposed to be built.
Scotland - -	£.200,000	5 sail of the line
Middlesex - -	140,000	4 sail of the line
Westminster - -	96,000	2 sail of the line
London - -	74,000	2 sail of the line
York - -	72,000	2 sail of the line
Kent - -	50,000	1 sail of the line
Somerset - -	42,000	1 ditto
Norfolk - -	39,000	1 ditto
Essex - -	38,000	1 ditto
Suffolk - -	34,000	1 ditto
Devon - -	32,000	1 ditto
Lancaster - -	32,000	1 ditto
Surrey - -	31,000	1 ditto
Wales - -	29,000	1 ditto
Southampton - -	26,000	1 ditto
Lincoln - -	25,000	1 ditto
Gloucester - -	25,000	1 ditto
Wilts - -	22,000	1 ditto
Warwick - -	20,000	1 ditto
Suffex - -	20,000	1 ditto
Hertford - -	19,000	1 fifty-gun ship
Stafford - -	18,000	1 ditto

Districts.	Sums proposed to be raised in each District in 3 Years.	Rate proposed to be built.
Southwark - -	£. 17,000	1 fifty-gun ship
Northampton - -	16,000	1 ditto
Berks - -	16,000	1 ditto
Chester - -	16,000	1 ditto
Salop - -	15,000	1 ditto
Oxford - -	15,000	1 ditto
Cornwall - -	14,000	1 frigate of 44 or 32 guns
Worcester - -	14,000	1 ditto
Bucks - -	14,000	1 ditto
Northumberland - -	13,000	1 ditto
Dorset - -	13,000	1 ditto
Leicester - -	12,000	1 ditto
Derby - -	12,000	1 ditto
Cambridge - -	12,000	1 ditto
Durham - -	11,000	1 ditto
Nottingham - -	10,000	1 ditto
Hereford - -	10,000	1 ditto
Cumberland - -	8,000	1 small frigate or floop
Bedford - -	7,000	1 ditto
Huntingdon - -	5,000	1 ditto
Westmoreland - -	4,000	1 ditto
Monmouth - -	3,000	1 ditto
Rutland - -	1,800	1 ditto
Total sum -	£. 1,342,800	

Making, in all, as follows :

Ships of the line	-	-	30
Fifty-gun ships	-	-	8
Frigates	-	-	11
Sloops	-	-	6
Total	-	-	55

But

But it may be said, that procuring money is not the only circumstance to be desired; but it is also necessary to have slips on which those ships may be built, and shipwrights by whom they may be constructed.

When the clamour that has been raised with respect to a scarcity of slips is considered, it will, I am persuaded, be difficult to believe that the expence of making one does not exceed the small sum of from 1500 to 2000l. When we are told that the navy of England is at a stand, because all the slips in the kingdom are occupied, one would be apt to imagine, that there is some natural impediment to the construction of more slips, or that the expence is so enormous, that it is impossible for this nation to increase the number, however necessary it may be. How much, therefore, must the zealous public-spirited friend to his country be astonished to find, that this mighty bugbear is a trifling obstacle so easily removed. If the want of slips is the only obstruction to our regaining an undoubted superiority at sea, let us without delay set heartily about it, and, in less than three months, thirty, forty, or fifty slips may be constructed, for a sum which, in a national view,

view, cannot be accounted a very material object.

Some men are so ingenious at discovering impediments in the way of any farther naval exertions, that, though they confess the possibility of constructing slips at a small expence, yet they doubt whether there be places along the extended coasts of this island, with a depth of water sufficient to launch a ship of the line. It seems unnecessary, however, to dwell upon that point, as any person may find, upon enquiry, that there are places more than sufficient in the river Thames itself, to remove that visionary objection.

A scarcity of shipwrights would be an evil indeed, if it were not easy to make the shipwrights we have in the King's yards work much more than they do at present, and were it not possible to add, with little difficulty, as many more as can be wanting*.

There is little doubt but means similar to those by which shipwrights in private yards

* The following is an exact account of the number of shipwrights, &c. employed in the King's dock-yards, anno 1782, as laid before parliament;

Shipwrights

yards were prevailed upon to build by task, or piece-work, might induce the King's shipwrights to follow their example; by which one-third more work might be done in the same space of time*. If that is not sufficient, there surely can be no difficulty in increasing the number of ship-carpenters. Ship-building is an art not very difficult to acquire; at least, any other species of carpenter, under the superintendence of an experienced shipwright, might soon be made capable of assisting in the construction of a ship. I know the prejudice which shipwrights have against those, who have not served what is called a regular apprenticeship, to that branch of business. One reason

Shipwrights in the King's dock-yards	—	2193
Caulkers in ditto	—	221
Servants to working shipwrights	—	297
Servants to working caulkers	—	119
		2830

Servants to the officers belonging to the King's yards, &c.	650
	3480

* The wages of shipwrights in the King's dock-yards is about two shillings and a penny per day, with perquisites, supposed to amount to 5*d.* more, and advantages in case of age or sickness. In private yards they receive 3*s.* 6*d.* but when they work task or piece-work, they may earn from 5 to 8 shillings per day. This proves the great superiority of task-work for building quickly.

for which is, that having apprentices is attended with some pecuniary emolument. On this objection and apparent obstacle I would build the restoration of the British navy. There is not a shipwright, who would not be glad to have as many apprentices as might with propriety be allowed him. There is scarcely an individual of the many thousands, who are spread all over the island, as house-carpenters, wheelwrights, cartwrights, &c. who, by the certainty of ample wages, would not be prevailed upon to serve as apprentice, for a certain space of time, under experienced shipwrights in the King's dock-yards. If these two principles are found, which I have every reason to believe is the case, where is the difficulty of increasing the number of shipwrights to any amount that may be thought necessary?

Indeed, if the existence of the country were to depend upon an immediate increase of its marine; and if this could not be procured by any other means, I should consider it to be not only justifiable, but even indispensably necessary, to compel all our shipwrights to work in the King's dock-yards. In former times, that class of sub-
jects

jects was liable to be pressed into the public service as seamen still are ; and surely never was a time, when such a step might be so easily vindicated. It is the less necessary, however, to take this plan into consideration, as the shipwrights now in the King's yards, with the assistance of private builders, are in number fully sufficient, if properly employed, to build as many ships as can possibly be required ; the Author having it in his power to assert, upon the authority of that respectable shipbuilder Mr. Perry, that so small a number as 30 shipwrights and 10 labourers, *when they work by the piece*, may construct a 74-gun ship, if the timber is shaped and prepared for the purpose, in the short space of nine or ten months : 2000 shipwrights, therefore, might build, in one year, at least 60 sail of the line.

Indeed, if ships were wanted, why might not the plan be adopted of converting East Indiamen into ships of war ? Those Indiamen, it is true, whose decks are completed, cannot be made to carry more than 40 guns : but I assert it, on the most unquestionable authority, that such as are not totally finished, may be converted into 54-gun

gun ships*; and are equal in strength, and in every respect fit to contend with the 60-gun ships of Spain, who, by the number of such ships in their line, have so frequently deterred us from hazarding a close engagement with the combined squadrons of the enemy.

But ships and men would be procured in vain, if a proper spirit cannot be excited among the officers of the navy; and some steps ought to be taken, to rouse in them a more laudable ambition, than the paltry thirst of prize-money. The idea of a naval order, which was principally intended for that purpose, I have already ventured to suggest. Were it divided into different classes, so that every individual, whatever his station might be, who displayed peculiar courage and good conduct, were certain of being conspicuously rewarded, I should not despair of seeing our seamen elated with other events, beside wealthy captures from the enemy. The following motion is submitted to the consideration of those public-spirited members of the house, who wish to encourage still greater exertions in the naval department.

* See farther observations upon this subject, in the public-spirited Letters addressed to Sir Thomas Charles Bunbury, Bart. by a Suffolk Freeholder.

“ That an humble address be presented
 “ to his Majesty, earnestly entreating his
 “ Majesty to take into his royal consider-
 “ ation, the propriety of conferring still
 “ farther marks of his royal countenance
 “ and favour on the officers of his navy.

“ That his faithful Commons, perfectly
 “ convinced how much his Majesty delights
 “ to reward the merit of gallant men, and
 “ fully sensible that honorary distinctions,
 “ as marks of royal and of public approba-
 “ tion, must gratify the natural ambition of
 “ individuals of that description, cannot see,
 “ without regret, that no *peculiar distinction*
 “ of that nature is appropriated for naval
 “ services; though the navy of Great Bri-
 “ tain is deservedly accounted its greatest
 “ glory, bulwark, and defence.

“ That if it should prove his Majesty’s
 “ most gracious pleasure to institute A NA-
 “ VAL ORDER, to reward the gallant at-
 “ chievements of British sailors, his faithful
 “ Commons will chearfully make good any
 “ expence attending such an institution.”

Here also it may be proper to remark,
 that though an increase of the navy, with
 the

the different plans above stated, must be some addition to the public expence, yet, that there is not so ample a field for economy in the state, as the marine department. A commission of accounts, to regulate our naval expences, would be a fortunate circumstance indeed; and would put more into the pocket of the public, than any other plan of that nature, which has yet been suggested. When it is considered, that from the 1st of January 1776, to the 1st of January 1782, £.48,963,523:0:9 $\frac{3}{4}$ has been either voted for the fleet, or issued out in navy bills, every one must perceive, what a field there is for investigation and economy.

It would be natural to conclude this tract, with offering some apology for the various defects which it contains, both in matter and in style. But it may be sufficient to remark, that it is written by one who does not profess to be either an author, or a seaman; but who wished to assign the grounds upon which he founds his opinion, that if a bad peace is concluded, it ought not to be attributed to any deficiency in our NAVAL RESOURCES.

POSTSCRIPT.

ON THE

Naval Events of the LAST WAR.

IT is a singular enough circumstance, that the observations in PART I., which, so far as theory could go, sufficiently ascertained the superior naval resources of the British Empire, should have been published on the 10th of May 1782, and that, eight days afterwards, the news of Lord Rodney's victory, on the 12th of April, should have arrived, confirming, by so great an event, what otherwise sceptical people might have considered as mere speculation.

The

The naval incidents of the last war, were, on the whole, not less glorious, than those of the one immediately preceding; and I shall endeavour, shortly, to state the result, as it must satisfy the most incredulous, respecting the great superiority that this country *naturally possesses* in point of naval resources.

In stating the circumstances of the last war, it will be impossible to separate France from the other confederates, and it will be the best mode to give, at one glance, an abstract of the loss sustained on both sides, in the course of the war.

The following is a state of the ships belonging to Great Britain, which were either taken, or destroyed in order to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy:

	No. of Ships.	No. of Guns.
Ships of the line	1	*74
Fifty-gun ships	2	100
From 32 to 50	11	388
From 32 downward	17	404
	31	966

* This 74-gun ship was the *Terrible*, which was not taken by the enemy, but destroyed by ourselves, to prevent its falling into their hands.

The

The ships of the Confederates, either taken or destroyed, were as follows :

	No. of Ships.		No. of Guns.	
Ships of the line	-	-	27	- 2054
Fifty-gun ships	-	-	2	- 100
From 32 to 50	-	-	30	- 1062
Vessels under 32 guns	-	-	28	- 664
			87	- 3880
English ships taken or destroyed	-	-	31	- 966
Balance in favour of Great Britain	56	-	2914	

Such a balance in our favour, as 56 ships of war, carrying 2914 guns, is a striking proof of our great naval superiority, and certainly does infinite credit to the spirit and exertions of our seamen, who could furnish us with such a list.

It is to be hoped, even at the conclusion of this war, that we shall be able to produce a statement equally honourable and satisfactory. Disgraceful it indeed would be, if we, who had conquered at sea, with all the great maritime strength of Europe against us, should now be unable to withstand a single enemy, when every other naval power is either neutral, or bound by treaty to assist us.

THE END.

The ships of the Confederates, either taken or destroyed, were as follows:

No. of ships.		No. of guns.	
27	-	2054	-
2	-	100	-
30	-	1002	-
23	-	664	-
		3880	

English ships taken or destroyed - 31 - 666

Balance in favour of Great Britain 30 - 2914

Such a balance in our favour, as to ships of war, carrying 2014 guns, as a striking proof of our great naval superiority, and certainly does infinite credit to the spirit and exertions of our seamen, who could furnish us with such a list.

It is to be hoped, even at the conclusion of this war, that we shall be able to produce a statement equally honourable and satisfactory. Disgrace it indeed would be, if we, who had so long been the great maritime power of Europe, should now be unable to withstand a single enemy, when every other naval power is either neutral, or bound by treaty to assist us.



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